

A New

9/4

# DESCRIPTION

O F

## Orkney, Zetland,

Pightland - Firth and Caithness,

W H E R E I N,

After a short Journal of the Author's Voyage thither, These Northern Places are first more Generally Described; Then a Particular View is given of the several *Isles* thereto belonging; Together with an Account of what is most Rare and Remarkable therein: as also the Author's Observations thereupon.

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Dedicated to his Grace the Duke of  
*Hamilton.*

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By J O H N B R A N D.

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E D I N B U R G H,

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To His GRACE,  
**JAMES**  
DUKE OF  
**HAMILTON.**

*May it please Your Grace,*



Pon my Return from Zet-land, as bound in Duty, I payed my Respects to Your GR. Who was pleased to ask, If I had kept a Diary? Which I acknowledged, but could not shew it, till the Remarks therein contained, were Transcribed, which when done, Y. GR. should have them to glance at, some leisure Hour. Thus Your Command giving Rise to this Undertaking, I have presumed to make the Dedication to Y. GR.

The Noble and Illustrious Family of HAMILTON, the first in the Nation, standeth in no  
\* 2 need

need of Panegyrics from me, to set forth its Eminency. His GR. Your FATHER was very Instrumental in Settling the Peace and Quiet of this Kingdom at the late Merrifol and Wonderful Revolution, as became a Patriot of His Country; Under whose Presidency, in the Convention of Estates, the Government of Our Church was Restored, which since hath been Confirmed by the subsequent Parliaments.

In His *Surviving Consort*, Your Pious MOTHER, these Endowments and Qualifications requisite in the Consort of a Prince, have Eminently shined Forth, which will Embalm Her Name to succeeding Generations: Her likewise being so very Helpful to many Afflicted Ones, both in the former Years of this Churches Distress and Trouble, and in the latter of great Scarcity and Dearth, She knowing how Valuable are the Blessings of those, who were ready to Perish.

Your GR. Honourable Appearance for, and Acknowledgment of Presbyterian Government, in the last Session of Parliament, was Acceptable to many: And I hope Y. GR. shall never have Cause to Repent of Your Continuing to Favour the Ancient Government of this Church, which as it is Conform to the Scripture-Plan, so the Lord hath been Graciously Pleased to owne and Countenance it, in the Great Things, he hath done for and by the Ministers and Professors thereof.



( )  
Among these things for which You stand Obliged to the Wise Conduct of Providence, One is, That You have been so well Directed in the Happy Choice of Your Consorts: Your Present LADY of a Sweet and Gentle Temper, Her Carriage Obliging and Discreet to all, Her Loving to Entertain Pious and Religious Discourse, Her Modest and Exemplary Dress: I wish She may prove a Blessing to Y. Illustrious Family, and be as *Rachel* or as *Leah*, which two did Build up the House of *Israel*.

Your Noble Brother LORD GEORGE, hath been Created by Our Present GRACIOUS KING, EARL of ORKNEY, for His Heroick Appearances, under the Auspicious Conduct of Our King, who was pleased to take notice thereof, some of these being under His Majesties View; And in Testimony of His Royal Favour, Dignify Him with this Honourable Title, which in the Years of Ancient Times, hath Blazoned the Escutcheons of Kings.

As is evident by the Narrative of his Patent of Honour.

The Branches of Y. Illustrious Family do Flourish in several Parts of the Nation, tho God in His Holy Providence, hath made lately a Breach thereupon, to Y. Grief, and the Nations Loss.

Your GR. Relation to the Ancient and Honourable Family of *Douglas*, gives me occasion to mention that old Alliance betwixt that House and the Princes of *Orkney*. *William* Lord of *Niddisdale*, commonly called the *Black Douglas*,  
by

Hist. of the  
House of  
Douglas &  
Angus.

About the  
end of the  
14 and be-  
ginning of  
the 15 Cent.

( )  
by *Egidia* or *Giles* Daughter of King *Rob. 2.*,  
had a Daughter of the same Name, Married to  
*Henry Sinclar* usually Styled Knight of the *Cockle*,  
of the *Garter*, and Prince of *Orkney*. To Him  
Succeeded his Son *William Sinclar*, Married to  
*Elizabeth Douglas*, Daughter to *Archibald* Earl  
of *Douglas*, Sir-Named *Tineman*; Whose Titles  
were, Knight of the *Golden Fleece* and of  
the *Cockle*, Prince of *Orkney*, Duke of *Holden-*  
*burgh*, Earl of *Caithness*, Lord *Sinclar*, Lord  
of *Niddisdale*, Great Admiral of *Scotland*  
&c.

My L. the Knowledge of History, is that  
which the most of Men are taken with, as be-  
ing both Pleasant and Useful; And it cannot  
but stain the Reputation of any, tho able to  
give Account of what is Rare in other Coun-  
trys, if they be Ignorant of their own, and Places  
which Depend thereupon, where things no less  
Remarkable do Occur, which may both Ex-  
ercise the Ingenious, and Edify the Gracious  
Inquirers.

But above all, Blessed are they who make  
a Religious Improvement of Natural Observes,  
and use all Arts and Sciences as Hand-maids to  
Religion and Piety; The Knowledge of Christ  
is the Queen of Sciences, Hence a Learned  
*Paul determineth to know nothing but Christ and*  
*Him Crucified*; And those who in all Ages have  
been Wise unto Salvation, have preferred  
Christ's Cross to the Worlds Crown; And  
with *Moses*, reckoned His worst things better then  
the Worlds best. The Knowledge of all other  
things



(( . ))

things without the Knowledge of Christ, is as a Shadow without the Substance, and a Body without the Head, as some have Instituted the Comparifon; Yea they are *ἀνόητοι* without Mind and Judgment; The Cardinal Vertues, as they are called, may be Attained in Shew, but not in Truth, *Quid enim illis cum Virtutibus qui Dei Virtutem Christum ignorant?* All the Glory and Grandure of the World, laid in the Ballance with this piece of Saving Knowledge, is but as a Grain Weight to counter-balance a huge Mountain: Hence a notable saying of a truly Noble Lord, when set upon by the Jesuits, to change his Religion, Tempting him with Splendid and Rich Offers, *Let their Money, saith he, Perish with them, who think all the Glory of the World, worth one days Communion with Jesus Christ.* And truly it is but small Gain, the most Painful and Able Student doth Reap, if after all his Labour in the Records of Antiquity and Researches of Nature, and it may be through the Maze of Intricate Disquisition, he lose his Soul, and notwithstanding of all his Learning be thrust into Hell, being forced to cry out on Death Bed, as it is reported the Learned *Grotius* once did, *Ah vitam perdidici, operose nihil agendo,*

*Galeaceus  
Caracciolus  
Marquis of  
Vico in the  
Kingdom  
of Naples.*

*Indocti rapi-  
unt calum-  
br nos cura  
Doctrina  
nostra in  
Gehennam  
trudimur.*

My Lord, I hope it will not prove Unfavorable to Y. GR., that I have a little Enlarged this Epistle, in Commending of Christ and Religion, which so much Transcendeth Our Commendation and Praise, whence so many Advantages do Accrue to Us, and among others, when



( )  
when there are early Impressions of Piety on  
any, the Conscience for ever after useth to hang  
about them, notwithstanding the Tenor of their  
Lives hath been assaulted with manifold Ten-  
tations. That Y. GR. may still continue  
to be a True Lover of Your Country, and  
a Zealous Asserter of Her Rights and Liber-  
ties, is and shall be the Desire of him,  
who is

*May it please Your GR.*

*Your GR. most Humble*

*and most Dutiful Servant,*

*John Brand.*

**P R E**

---

# PREFACE

To the

# READER.

I shall not insist on an Apology, why I trouble the Sweating Press, tho I might use and plead the common Topicks taken from the Advice and Imporunity of others, and to prevent the Publishing of some of these Remarks, excerpt from my Papers, by me, into whose hands, they had fallen, after they had lien by me several Months.

There are several Grave Persons in these Isles of good and solid Judgment, both Ministers and Others, who being better acquainted with the Places of their ordinary Residence, then it can be supposed I had occasion to be, might have Published something more Valuable on this Head, and set their Remarks in a clearer Light. As likewise some of my Dear Brethren of the Commission, might have done it to greater Advantage. Yet the Engagements that lay on me, to Transcribe the most Remarkable Occurrences, and the Solicitation of some thereupon, to Publish them, have some way obliged me to make this Appearance. However if others

\* \*

hereby



## Preface

hereby shall be excited to serve the Publick, by giving a fuller and clearer Description of these Generally little known Places, this Essay will not prove altogether unuseful. And if I had known that any intended to have Published something of this nature, the World had not been troubled with my Scribling.

I hope none will judge, that I Act without my Line, in giving Descriptions of this Nature, seeing all are called to Remember the Works of the Lord and Talk of His Doings, as they have occasion: And all along, I endeavour to keep in mind the Character I bear, dropping something of a Spiritual Improvement.

Our Historians, such as I have consulted, have given but a very brief and lame, and in some things a false Account of these places, especially Zetland, which is unknown to the most of the Nation, if not, that they have only heard, there were such Isles, as the Zetlandick. It is true, there is one Mr. Wallace a late Minister in Orkney, who hath gratified the World, by giving a Description, of the Orkney-Isles; But neither Zetland nor Caithness doth he meddle with: And as to Orkney, there are several things which deserve their own Remark, he makes no mention of; And others have fallen out since his time, which I have noticed. So that, on the whole, the Account now given even of Orkney, will appear almost new to any, who shall be pleased to compare the two Descriptions together.

No doubt but such as know these Places, will considerate several things no less Remarkable, then what are Observed; But still my Reader would remember, That this is but a Diary Transcribed. Yet this



13  
To the Reader.

I may say, as I have not willingly suffered myself to be imposed on, so neither have I imposed any thing on the Credulous World, but delivered such things which either I was witness to, or had good ground to believe from Persons worthy of Credit. So that if any thing appear Questionable, I have ordinarily in general given my Author for it.

I suppose the judicious Reader in perusing the following sheets, will find things both Curious and Instructive, affording matter of Meditation to the Wise Observers of Providence.

As to any Philosophical or Philological Observes, as I am unfit for, so am I far from a Magisterial dictating of them to any, but soberly proposed my own Sentiments, which if my Reader do not relish, he may follow his own.

Altho the Style be not Quaint and Elegant, embellish'd with the Ornaments of Art; yet I hope it will be found plain and intelligible; and tho sometimes obliged to express my self in the Dialect or Idiotism of the Countrey, yet ordinarily such Words and Phrases are some way explained. So when I speak of Orkney or Zetland, as not in Scotland, tho depending thereupon, I express my self, as the Countrey do.

As to the Commissions Work I have not meddled therewith, except when the threed of the History did require me to touch it. However this I may add, Our weak endeavours, for the Advancement of the Interest of Our LORD JESUS, in these remote Corners, have not been found, by Superiour Judicatories, altogether unsuccessful; And, I suppose, it repents none of us, of our Voyage thither; however dangerous it did prove.

Omne tulit  
punctum qui  
misceuit uti-  
le dulci.

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## ERRATA.

**S**ome Typographical Errors have crept into the Press, which the Reader would be pleased to correct, as page 7. We saw, lege, when we saw. page 38. my Lord Drin, lege my Lord Darnly or Darnly. p 94. Hileshe, lege Hildeshe. Upon the head of the Pages, 137, till 146, a Description of *Zetland*. lege a Description of Pightland Firth. Some other small Errata's there are, which the Candid Reader will pardon, seeing in so far as I observe, they do not marr the sense.



# A

## Description of Orkney, Zetland and Caithness.

### INTRODUCTION.

**I**T is a Principle generally acknowledged, That all Men in their several Stations, according to their Capacities, are carefully to study the maintaining and promoting of the good and interest of that Kingdom, Nation or Society; whereof they are Members; For if it go not well with the Publick in common, it cannot reasonably be thought, that the happiness of any in particular can long continue, more than it can go well, with the several Members of a Natural Body, when the Body it self is distressed. It was this generous Love and Concern for their Country, that so signalized the *Ancient Romans*, and made them in a short time, arrive to such a height of Glory and Honour; Unto this did their Philosophers, Poets, and Oratours warmly excite their Fellow Citizens, so that the more, or the less any laid out themselves this way, their Achievements accordingly were reputed Noble and Heroick, and their Persons renowned.

All Men  
obliged to  
promote  
the pub-  
lick good

*Non nobis  
nati, sed  
Patria &  
Republi-  
ca  
Cicero.  
Dulce &  
decorum  
est pro Pa-  
tria mori.*

Yet much more will we find our selves bound to advance one another's good, if we look on our selves not only as Men and Members of the Body Politick, but as Christians and Members of that Body, whereof Christ is the Head: Therefore our Love of, Care for, and Sympathy with one another, is much commended in holy Scripture, which the Apostle well illustrateth

Especially  
Christians  
bound to  
this.

*Rom. 12.  
4. 5.  
1. Cor. 12  
12. 27. &c.*



## A Journal

in several places by that apposite and elegant similitude of the Members of a natural Body, their conspiring to the mutual good of one another; and expressly commandeth, *Look not every Man on his own things, but also on the things of others*: And the want thereof he doth heavily regrave in the same Chap. *For I have no Man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state: For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christs.* Which selfish and narrow Spirit, as it hath too much prevailed in all Ages of the Christian Church, since the Days of the *Apostles*; so in none more, then this of ours, As the learned *Owen* observeth, imputing the shame and the almost Ruine of Christianity thereunto, “The Lord Christ, *said he*, hath ordained, that the “Members of the same Church and Society, should “mutually watch over one another, and the whole “Body over all the Members unto their Edification. “And that the practice of it is so much lost as it is, is the shame and almost Ruine of Christianity.

*Phil. 2. 4.*  
*20. 21.*

*Owen on*  
*Hebr. 12*  
*15.*

More especially all clothed with Authority Civil or Ecclesiastick. *Gubernatores, Metaphorâ a Naucleis Navem Gubernantibus ductâ*

But more especially these clothed with Authority Civil or Ecclesiastick stand obliged to this publick care, Ministers being as Pilots or Governours under Christ to the Ship of the Church, as Magistrates under God are to that of the State. And the Charge of Ministers having a more immediate respect to the Soul and better part of Man, they are called the more diligently to take heed thereto, and so to steer their Course through the boisterous Sea of this World, as that not only they themselves at length may arrive and rest at the *Fair Havens of Immanuel's Land*, but that also through Grace they may carry alongs many with them embarked on the same bottom of the Covenant, by the Means of *Word and Discipline*. Ministers are *Stewards, Watchmen, Shepherds, Bishops or Overseers &c.* All which do imply a Charge to be discharged by them for the good of others.

Ministers considered in a 3 fold Relation.

Ministers may be considered in a threefold Relation. 1. As Christians related to Christ, which is common

common to them with all believers. 2. As Ministers, and related to that particular Church or portion of the Church in general, the inspection whereof is assigned to them, and in which more especially and immediately they are called to labour. 3. As they stand related to the Church National, whereof they are Ministers, whose good they are to endeavour, as God in his holy and wise Providence shall afford them access. And that in all these respects Ministers may the more approve themselves unto their great Lord and Master, according to his Appointment, the Apostles Example, and the Practice of the Church in all Ages, they do associate themselves into Councils, Meetings or Assemblies more or less General, that so by common Counsel and Consent, they may consult the interest of the Church of Christ, within their respective districts and Bounds: Which as it hath been the laudable practice of other Churches, so of the Church of Scotland, ever since her first Reformation from Popery.

For which end the General Assembly of this National Church moved with Zeal for the Glory of God, hath travelled much since the late happy Revolution in planting the North of Scotland, and that they might not be wanting in visiting the outmost bounds thereof, with the Isles thereto belonging, have deputed several Commissions, who repairing thither might upon the place take under their consideration, the concerns of the Church of Christ in these corners, and determine therein as they should see cause, according to the Word of God and Acts of Assemblies of this Church. Particularly one was sent to Caithness and Orkney Anno 1698 who did God and his Church good service there.

Assemblies  
zealous in  
planting  
the North  
of Scot-  
land.

Commis-  
sion sent  
to Orkney

In like manner the General Assembly Anno 1700. upon the desire of certain Ministers in Zetland, and Information of the State of Affairs in these remote Islands, found it necessary to depute a Commission thither, consisting of seven Ministers and one Ruling Elder; With Power not only to visite and order the Churches, there,

Commis-  
sion to  
Zetland.



## A Journal

there, but likewise to concur with and assist the *Presbyteries of Orkney and Caithness*, as there should be occasion.

The Author's design.

Of this Commission, the Author being one, designs a brief description of these remarkable parts; after a short Journal of his Voyage thither, with some cursory Observes thereupon.

### C H A P. I.

*Containing a brief Journal of our Voyage from Leith to Orkney, and thence to Zetland: As likewise of our Return from Zetland by Orkney to Caithness: Together with a Summary Account of the remarkable Dangers we were in.*

We set Sail from Leith.

ON Friday 12. April 1700. about six a Clock in the Morning, we set Sail from *Leith*, for *Orkney*, the Wind fair tho faint, which not being able to bear us up against the Tide, we dropt Anchor two Miles East of *Inch-keith*, where we lay from Ten till three in the Afternoon, when a Brisk-gale arising, we weighed Anchor, and Sailed down the *Firth*, the Ship making so good way, that before next Morning at break of Day, we were past *Montross*.

Past Murray Firth.

On Saturday the Wind lessened; yet about Sun-set we past *Peterhead*, Steering towards the Point of *Kinnaird*, leaving the *Bridges of Ratray* (a ridge of Blind Rocks) on our Larboard. Next Morning, being the Lord's Day, with a gentle Wind, we made the best of our way through *Murray Firth*, spending the Day in Religious Exercises with the Mariners and some Passengers in company with us. When before *Peterhead* we saw the fins of a great Fish, about a yard above the Water, which they call a *Pricker*; Also about Ten at Night, a *Whale* was seen by the help of Moon-light, at a little distance from our Ship, casting forth the Water in a hideous manner.

Land in Orkney.

Next Morning about Seven a Clock we got sight of *Orkney*, and the Wind blowing some what harder, than it had done the former Night, in the Afternoon we passed

passed the East End of *Piehlund Firth*, which though ordinarily raging with the impetuous current of a Sea, by reason of the many Tides meeting there, yet we found it not so, but in the midst of that part we passed, dined upon Deck, so meeting with least Danger, where we feared the greatest. We put in to *Holmsound*, and arrived there about Seven at Night, on the Monday after our setting sail.

The Ship's Crew told us, that tho they had frequently Sailed these Seas to and from *Orkney*, yet never had they a better or pleasanter Voyage: Which Providential favour was the more observable, the Wind next Day after we Landed, blowing strong from the North and lasting several Days, Which if it had come on, before we had accomplished our Voyage, we would not only have been blown back to Sea, but thereby a tempest arising, we had been in no small danger. We desired to look upon this as a signal Mercy, and a token for good.

We would have hired our Bark to *Zetland*, but the Master being under Charter-party, was obliged to return with a freight of Victual to *Leith*, and not having the occasion of any other Ship or Bark, we were forced to hire one of these open Boats of about sixty Meils which the *Orkney Men* use for carrying Victual to *Zetland*, else we could not go for *Zetland* this season, tho the Ministers and others told us our Passage might prove dangerous.

Our stay in *Kirkwall*, the chief Town in *Orkney*, [assisting that Presbytery in some of their affairs] was from the 16. to the 27. of April, when with 3. Ministers of this Country on the Commission, we took boat for *Sanda* about 30. Miles North-East from *Kirkwall*, and in our way to *Zetland*, having ordered our own Boat to follow with the first fair Wind, We put off about two in the Afternoon, the Men rowing with six Oars about half way, when the Wind rising something favourable with a little Sail and 4. Oars we got over *Stronz, a Firth*. Tho as we came near our landing



place in *Sanda*, the increasing Wind raised the Waves so high, that sometimes they intercepted the sight of the *Island*, Yet we got all safe on shore betwixt 9. and 10. at Night. The *Mercy* of our escape was the more remarkable, that our Boat was throng'd with Passengers; and so overladen that the Water came almost to her brim; so that if the Sea had not been smooth and calm, when we past throw *Stronze Firth*, we had been probably all lost: As these who had knowledge of those Seas did afterwards declare unto us.

Go from  
*Sanda* to  
*Eda*.

We waited in *Sanda* for a Wind from April 27. till May 9. when the Wind presenting, we went to the *Isle* of *Eda* lying a little to the West of *Sanda*, where our Boat was; but before we could get on board, the Wind shifted to South-East, and then to East and by South, which was too scrimp to fetch *Zetland*; however the Wind now being very changeable, we judged it expedient for us to ly near our Boat, and lay hold on the first occasion: So May 11. the Wind at South-East we put to Sea, but scarce well were we without the *Red-Head* of *Eda*, when the Wind proving contrary, we returned to *Calf-Sound* May 12. being the Lord's Day which we spent in Religious Exercises with the People of the *Isle*; in the Evening the Wind turning fair, we resolved next Morning early to get Aboard, if the Wind held. This last Night, after we returned to *Calf-Sound*, was terrible for Wind and Rain from the West, (the Wind soon altering, after we had got in again to *Calf-Sound*) with which we could not have kept the Sea, in all probability. A great *Mercy* then it was, that we were determined to return, and did not keep the Sea, as some advised, for tho within half an hour after we had got in to the *Sound*, the Wind turned fair, yet being too strong, the Sea became foul and tempestuous, which was not for our open Boat.

Munday Morning May 13. about two of the Clock, we were called to go Aboard which we did accordingly.

ly, the Wind at West or West and by North, the Gale was brisk, but not very great, which we were glad of, thereby expecting a speedy passage: So we with two other Boats in Company loosed, but scarce were we a League without the Heads, when we saw a storm of Wind and Rain making in the West, whence the Wind blew, whereupon one of the Boatmasters in company, advised us to tack about, and endeavour to fetch *Calf-Sound* again, which counsel we judgeing to be safe, accordingly assayed to follow it, but the Wind and Sea rising more boisterous, and the Current of the Ebb being strong from the Sound, we could not by any means effectuate our design, tho we made several Trips not without danger; the Sea with its broken and swelling waves threatening to swallow us up every moment: The Mariners stood by their Sails, crying, This work was very dangerous, and at one time, as one of them observed, the Boat had taken in about 10. Barrels of Water, the Pump was still kept going, we judged ourselves to be lost Men, and some expressed so much. In these straits we desired the Boatmaster sitting by the Helm, to see if he could make any other Harbour or Bay; He answered, GOD have Mercy upon us, for the Sea we dare not keep, and there is not another Harbour in *Orkney* we can make, The Men were fatigued with the toil of their hard work, and almost at the giving over. We then knew to our experience the meaning of that Scripture, *Psal. 107. 27.* of Seamen in a storm's being at their wits end. Tho the Wind was fair for *Zetland*, yet we durst not hold on our Course, the Sea not only being tempestuous, but we had also several Rousis or impetuous Tides to pass, and then the Ebb was in the Sea, which made them so much the more dangerous. Thus straitned, we thought it advisable, to go down with some Sail before the Wind to the North end of *Sanda*, and endeavour to get in to *Otterwick* or *Taphness Bay*, we first attempted *Otterwick*, and lest we should have been blown

Putting  
off from  
*Eda*, we in  
great dan-  
ger.

Get into  
a Bay.

by



by the Bay's mouth, we held so near Land, that the Boat beat several times upon a Rock, however we got in and dropt Anchor on the weather side of the shore.

Go to Sea  
again.

We were all much refreshed with this great deliverance from so imminent a danger. When we had ridden some hours at Anchor, the Wind and Sea calmed, About 7. at Night one of the Boatmasters in company, who had entred the Bay a little before us, weighed Anchor and put to Sea again. Some of our number were for lying still, till the Weather was better settled, others thought that seeing GOD had commanded a Calm, that we had a favourable Wind, that the skie appeared to be well set and promising, and that the other Loadened Boat had gone to Sea before us, it might seem from these things Providence invited us to Sea again: Whereupon we put off, but before we had come the length of *North Ronaldsha*, scarce a League distant from the Bay, we had been in, the Wind became so faint, that the Mariners took them to their Oars, to help them through *North Ronaldsha Roust*, thence when we came to *Dennis Roust*, we made some way with our Sails without Oars, the Tide then turning and the Flood beginning to run in the Sea.

Blown  
back by  
contrary  
Winds to  
*Sironza*.

Tuesday May 14. about 1. or 2. in the Morning the Wind shifted to East South East, then to East, and our Boatmaster telling us, that he was forced to steer a Northern Course, else he could not bear Sail, and so holding on, not a stone in *Zetland* he could hit, as he expressed himself, we all judged it most proper to return to *Orkney*: When we had tacked about, the Wind shifted to North East, a strong Gale together with great Rains, which caused a rolling and a swelling Sea (for Rains here without Winds do raise, or canker, (as they term it) the Sea, and much more when Wind and Rain come on at once) however we got in safely to *Sironza Road*, which was the readiest we could make. It was a happy Providence that we then returned at that nick of time, for the Flood not being all spent, we were

were thereby likewise hastned in our way, so that within a few hours we came to our Port, tho as was reckoned, we were near mid-way between *Orkney* and *Fair Isle*. The storm increased with the Day, and after our landing it was so very great, that we were obliged to keep within doors, for several hours; And if then we had been at Sea, it is terrible for us to think upon the dismal effects which might have followed thereupon, for without all peradventure, we had certainly perished, if the Lord by some wonder of mercy had not rescued us, as indeed he had formerly done. "O that we would praise the Lord for his "Goodness, and for his wonderful works to the Chil- "dren of Men, And that so long as we live, we may "never forget the 13th. and 14th. Days of *May*, where- "in the Lord wrought a great deliverance for us.

Thus being discouraged, we were in great perplexi- Tho dis-  
ty, not knowing, what to do, Whether to make any couraged  
further attempt, or to return home, *re infecta*, seeing with dang-  
God in his Providence had so crossed us hitherto, and ers, we yet  
it might be his mind, we should not go forward. resolve to  
Upon these fluctuating and perplexing thoughts, we go for *Zet-*  
askt God's mind in the matter, after which more light land.  
did arise, and we unanimously resolved yet to trie,  
what the Lord would do with us.

Fryday *May* 17. between 8 and 9 in the morning, We arrive  
Wind and Skie promising well, we put to Sea, and at *Lermick*  
passed the *Fair Isle* about 5. Afternoon, keeping it on in *Zet-*  
our Starbord, then our Gale increasing, but continuing land.  
fair, at South West, we made good way, About Mid-  
night we past *Swinburgh Head*, the southernmost point  
of Land in *Zetland*, having thence 24. Miles to Sail  
up within Land to *Lermick*, whether we were bound.  
The Wind growing more vehement, we lowed our  
Main-sail, and took in a Riff; with the breaking of the  
Day, there arose a Mist, whereby we could scarce see  
Land, however we judged it safest, to keep as near it,  
as we could, and lued away by the Coast; But being



A danger  
escaped.

to pass through a Sound, having the Isle of *Musa* on our Starboard, and *Burra Land* on our Larboard, our Seamen mistook the point of *Musa*, taking another Point in the *Mainland* for it, and the Mist lying on, we were almost engaged in the Land, and so would have fallen among Rocks, which they coming to suspect, held to Sea, resolving to Sail without the Point which they did with difficulty, the Boat being so close haled, and the Blast great, that the Helm-a-lee, was scarce able to command her, and keep her by the Wind: Which when they had done, came to discover their Error. Hence sailing through *Musa Sound*, we came to *Brassa Sound*, and arrived at *Lerwick* on Saturday about 4. in the Morning.

Some remarkable  
Providence-  
ces by the  
way.

We had a quick Passage, sailing about 100. Miles in 19. or 20. hours time: Especially considering, that we were not half an hour on shore, when a strong Wind blew from the North, which if it had come on but a little sooner, we would have been driven back to Sea. There is likewise another Providence remarkable, that we had only an ordinary desirable Gale, when we passed the *Fair Isle*, where always there goes a great rolling Sea, but when within the Heads of the Land of *Zetland*, we had it very strong, so that scarcely we could have wrestled and held out against it in the Ocean.

We leave  
*Zetland*,  
and arrives  
at *Kirk-  
wall* in  
*Orkney*.

We arrived in *Zetland* May 18, and having brought to some Period and Close our Principal Work there, we set Sail for *Orkney*, June 11. saluting and bidding heartily farewell to the Ministers, and some Gentlemen of the Countrey, and to the most considerable Inhabitants of *Lerwick*, who kindly accompanied us to our Boat. We left *Zetland* Tuesday June 11. about 5. Afternoon, and having the Wind at North-West, or North-West and by North, we passed the *Start Head* of *Sanda* about 4. next Morning, and endeavouring to set in to *Kettelast* in *Sanda*, to put one of the Ministers of that Isle on shore; our Boat through our Boat-

A danger  
escaped,

masters

masters inadvertency struck on a Rock, without sustaining any damage, we knew; But the Wind not permitting to turn up to that Road, we all came to *Kirkwall*, and arrived there before 9. in the morning. Our passage from *Zetland* to *Orkney*, was yet quicker, than it was from *Orkney* to *Zetland*, we being but 16. hours in running 120. or as some say 128. Miles. Staying in *Orkney* a few days, we passed *Pightland Firth* to *Caithness*, and having dispatched our work in conjunction with the Presbytery there; we came home by Land, repairing with joy to our several Charges, where we may set up our *Ebenezer*, saying, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*

Pass  
*Pightland*  
*Firth* to  
*Caithness*,  
and thence  
home by  
Land.

I think we are called seriously to reflect upon the manner of the Lord's dealing with us, we have been long detained and crossed in our way to *Zetland*, tho we made several attempts to go forward; As to our *Commission*, we were appointed by the *General Assembly* of this *Church*, and it being put upon us without any desire of ours, or inclination that way, we accordingly undertook our Voyage, and came with a favourable Gale to *Orkney*: It is true, that there are natural causes of Wind and Rain, whereof we are to make a Spiritual improvement, especially when they do impede or promote our design; Moreover Gods Judgements are a great depth, and by the course of Nature, in giving greater or lesser Winds at his pleasure, he may carry on his more General Works of Providence, and yet thereby more especially intend the punishment of the wicked, or the Chastisement of his People, which they are called to consider and improve: And as true it is, God in his Wise Sovereignty may so deal with his People, for the trial of their Faith and other Graces, that they may be still and know that he is God, ruling as he pleaseth among the Children of Men: The Devil also, who is the *Prince of the power of the Air* may have an evil and malicious hand in things of this nature, Especially when Men purpose to do good, which tends to

Some Re-  
flections  
upon the  
dangers  
we had  
been in.



the overthrow of his Kingdom. O! that what we have met with, may be so blessed, as to render us more zealous against him and all Sin, whereby his Kingdom is established in the World, *That we may fight with Devils and be more than Conquerours through him who loved us.* I say tho these things and the like sometimes may, and ought to be had a regard unto, yet I do humbly judge that upon these so very dreadful dangers we have in great mercy escaped, we are called to examine our selves, and search into our Sins as we are *Christians* and as we are Ministers, for which the Lord may have a controversie with us; Our not being so faithful in our personal and pastoral work, in working out our own and others Salvation; Our impatience in not waiting the Lords time, but being too anxious to be in *Zetland* at any rate: And it is like in our not being so single in our ends in going, as we ought to be, &c. I conclude this *Chap.* As the *Psalmist* doth, *Plal. 107. Reflecting on the Wonders of Providence, Who so is wise, and will observe those things: Even they shall understand the loving kindness of the LORD.*

## CHAP' II.

A Description of *Orkney*, its Situation, Name first Planters, Language, Manners of the People, Wholesomeness of the Air, Corns, &c.

THE *Isles* belonging to *Scotland* have commonly been divided into three Classes; The Western, scattered in the *Deucalionian Ocean*, on the West, the *Orkney* and *Zetlandick*, both lying to the North of *Scotland*. As to the Western Isles, tho in number far exceeding both the Isles of *Orkney* and *Zetland*, yet I take no notice thereof, in the subsequent Description: our Commission not being deputed thither, so only the Latter shall I give some brief account of, not intending to advance any thing, but what I have either found to be true from my own observation, or had by good Information from sensible and grave Persons worthy of

The Isles  
belonging  
to *Scotland*  
divided into  
three Classes.

of credit, Some few things indeed seem Fabulous, nor do I say they are true, but that they are confidently reported and held to be true by severals in the Countrey; and being so remarkable in themselves, I could not well pass them without some Observe: And shall begin with *Orkney* as order requireth, we first Landing there.

As an account of a *Varlet*, p. 110. *Woman* in the *Water*, p. 114. *Sea Trowes*, p. 115.

*Orkney* lyes to the North of *Scotland*, bounded on the West by the *Denealedonian Ocean*; on the East, by the *German*; On the North, by the Sea, which divides *Orkney* from *Zetland*; And on the South, by *Pighland Firth*, 12. Miles broad, from *Dungiebie-Head* or *John Groat's House*, the Northermost House in *Scotland* to *Burwick* in *South-Ronaldsha*, the Southermost point of *Orkney*. It is commonly said to be about the 59th degree of Latitude at *Kirkmal* which lyes within the Countrey; tho the Southmost point of *South-Ronaldsha* is distant from the Northermost of *North-Ronaldsha*, near a degree.

The Situation of *Orkney*.

That *Orkney* or *Orcades* is the name of these Isles, is agreed in, by ancient and modern Writers, But of the Etymologie and whence the Name is derived, none I suppose will be found to give a satisfying account, Some alledging it to come from *Orcas*, which *Ptolomy* reckons to be a Promontory of *Caithness*, opposite to *Orkney*; Others from the Greek word *εἰσχω* *Coercco*, these Isles breaking and restraining the force of the raging Waves: Or from *Hurricano*, because of the Boisterous Winds and Hurricanes which often blow in this Countrey: Or from *Eruck* or *Orkenwald*, or some other Pictish Prince famous there at its first Plantation. Which derivations, some of them at least cannot but appear far fetcht to the thinking Reader: And indeed many in giving the Reasons of Names, do rather please their own Curiosity, than render a true account of their Original; seeing the Reasons generally of the Ancient Names of Countries are buried in oblivion, through the want of Writers, and neglect of the first Inhabitants, especially

Concerning the Name.

*Injuria Temporis multa in oblivione jacent sepulta.*



in these parts of the World, wherein Learning more slowly advanced.

The first Planters, and Possessours of the Countrey seem to have been the *Picts*, there being several old Houses, both here and in *Zetland*, which to this Day are called *Picts*, or *Pights Houses*, and the *Firth* between *Orkney* and *Caithness*, is still called *Pigheland Firth*; Whereupon some of our Historians, (as *Boethius*, Writing of the Isles of *Orkney*, doth observe,) design *Orkney*, the most ancient Kingdom of the *Picts*; *Orchades insula, antiquissimum Pictorum Regnum a quibusdam nostrarum rerum Scriptoribus vocitata*. And we find mention made of the Kings of *Orkney*, as *Buchanan* tells us of one *Belus*, who having Invaded *Scotland*, was defeated and put to Flight by *Ewen 2d. King of Scots*, Killing most of his Army, upon which *Belus* being much discouraged and broken in Spirit, despairing of Life, put hand in himself, and became his own Executioner, *Boethius* calls him *Balus*; *Balus autem Orcadum Rex fractus animo, desperata Salute, ne in hostium potestatem veniret, manum sibi intulit*. And in the Church of *Birsa* at the West end of the *Mainland* in *Orkney*, there is a long Stone yet standing erect, with the Name *Belus* inscribed thereon in ancient Characters; Probably this was the Place of his Interment. Also the *Minister* of *Sandwick's Manse* is said to have been the Residence of one of the Kings of *Picts*,, and therefore to this Day is called *Koningsgar*, or the *Kings House*; And that part of the *Manse*, which they say served for the Palace of a King, is so little, tho now kept in some Repair, that it could not well accommodate a Family of an ordinary rank; The Figure thereof and contrivance of its two Rooms or Chambers one above and another below, of narrow dimensions, are antick, and the Building hath been but courle. *Boethius* likeways tells of another King called *Bavus*, whom *Claudius Caesar* having subdued, anno Christi 43. He carried him with his Wife, and Children Captive to  
Rome

The 1<sup>st</sup>  
Possessors  
of the  
Countrey.

Boeth Hist  
de orcha.

Buchan  
Histo. on  
Ewen. 2.

Boeth Hist.  
Lib. 2.

Rome, and were led by him in Triumph: Buchanan questions the truth of this History, Tacitus affirming that part of Britain, then to have been altogether unknown to the Romans, *nec temere tamen crediderim quod nostri tradunt Scriptores, &c. quod Tacitus affirmet ante Julii Agricola adventum, eam Britannia partem Romanis omnino incognitam fuisse.* But if Boethius his Relation be true, the vanquishing of Orkney hath been reputed something considerable, seeing not to every Conquerour was allowed by the Roman Senate, the Glory of a Triumph.

It is also probable, the Government of these Isles continued with the Pictish Princes, till the Days of Kenneth 2d. King of Scots, a Warlick Prince, who having prevailed with his Nobles contrary to their own inclination, by a notable piece of craft, to engage in a War against the Picts, with an undaunted valour and courage, routed the Pictish Army, and wasted their Countrey with Fire and Sword, pursuing them to the Orkney Isles, which he then annexed to the Crown of Scotland, reigning from Orkney to Adrian's Wall Anno Dom, 854. Thence Orkney continued in the Possession of the Scots, till the Days of Donald Bane, about the Year 1099, who that he might secure the Kingdom to himself, promised the Isles to Magnus King of Norway, if he would assist him with a necessary Force; Which offer Magnus accepting, the Norwegians became Masters of the Isles, till Alexander 3d. about the Year 1263, Recovered them by expelling the Norwegians; Which ever since were possessed and disposed of by our Kings. To be brief at length William Douglass Earl of Mortoun got a Wadset of Orkney and Zetland from King Charles the first, Which Wadset with all the Rights, Contracts, Infeftments, &c. Thereunto appertaining, was reduced by a Decreet of the Lords of Session, obtained at the instance of his Majesties Advocat, against William Douglass also Earl of Mortoun, Grandchild to the foresaid Earl, February 1669, which Decreet was ratified and confirmed by Act of Parliament, the December following, erecting the Earldom of Orkney

Buchan  
Hist. in  
vitam Ca-  
rataci.

Kenneth  
2. expel-  
leth the  
Picts.

See Bu-  
chan. Hist.  
in vitam  
Ken. 2.  
Quietissi-  
me vixit  
promotis  
finibus ab  
Orcadum  
Insulis  
usque ad  
Vallum  
Adriani.

The Nor-  
wegians  
obtain  
possession  
of the  
Isles, and  
are expel-  
led thence  
by Alexr.

3. King of  
Scots.  
Act. 13.  
Parlia. 1.  
Charles 2.  
anno 1669,  
the Earl  
of Mor-  
toun Wad-  
set reduced  
by Act of  
Parlia-  
ment

ney



Mr. Wallace his  
Description of Ork-  
ney.

As the  
same Act,  
13. Par. 2.  
Char. 2.  
An. 1669,  
doth shew.  
The Coun-  
trety of  
Orkney  
and Zet-  
land rec-  
koned  
confide-  
rable, and  
the Title  
honou-  
rable.

The state  
of the  
Countrey  
confide-  
red; the  
People  
personable  
and hospi-  
table,  
Their  
Clothes.

ney and Lordship of Zetland into a Stewartry, to be cal-  
led in all time coming, the Stewartry of Orkney and Zet-  
land, the Reason commonly given, why the Earl of  
Mortoun lost the Wadset, was because some Chests of  
Gold were Seised by the Earl's Deputs in Zetland, got  
out of a rich Ship, called the *Carmelan* of *Amsterdam*,  
cast away there, Anno 1664; None of this Gold com-  
ing to the Kings *Treasury*, tho some of it, as was al-  
ledged, came to the Earls hands.

From our History we may know, that Orkney and  
Zetland have been reckoned so great and considerable  
a part of his Majesties Ancient Kingdom, that for divers  
ages they occasioned much expence of Blood and Trea-  
sure, for the maintaining thereof against the Invasion of  
Foraiguers, and recovering the same out of their hands  
by Arms and Treaties. The Title likeways of these  
Isles hath still been reputed honourable, hence it hath  
pleased Our present King to confer this Title of Earl of  
Orkney, upon Lord George Hamilton, Brother to his Grace  
the Duke of Hamilton, for good services done by him to  
His Majesties Person and Government.

I proceed to consider the present state of the Countrey.  
The People here are Personable and comely, and many  
of them, as I observed, are of a Ruddy complexion,  
which may be by reason of the Sea Air and their fre-  
quent Fish diet, such a colour and countenance as our  
Mariners use to have and retain for some Days after  
they are come from Sea: They are generally Hospitable  
and civil, giving kind and humane entertainment to  
Strangers, which we found to our experience. Both  
Men and Women are fashionable in their Clothes, no  
Men here use Plaids, as they do in our Highlands; In  
the North Isles of *Sanda Wessra*, &c. Many of the Coun-  
trety People wear a piece of a Skin, of a Seal, commonly  
called a Selch, Calf or the like, for Shoes, which they  
fasten to their Feet with strings or thongs of Leather,  
Their Houses are in good order, and well furnished  
according to their qualities.

They

They generally speak English, neither do I think, they have so much of the Northern Accent, as in many places of the North of *Scotland*, yet several of the *Isles* have some Words and Phrases peculiar to themselves. There are also some who speak *Norse* especially in the *Mainland*, as in the Parish of *Hara* there are a few yet living, who can speak no other thing, this Language not being quite extinct among them, since the *Norwegians* whole Language it is, had this Countrey in possession. And tho *Cathness* be near to *Orkney*, yet none in *Orkney* can speak *Irish*, tho the greatest part in *Cathness* can; Nor any in *Cathness* speak *Norse*, tho some in *Orkney* yet can do it.

Their Language.

The Air wholesome

The Air as it is peircing and cold, so it is free and healthy; Hence many arrive at a good old Age: One in *Evie* brought forth a Child in the 63 Year of her Age, as the Minister who had enquired thereunto, declared: A Man in the Parish of *Holm*, who died not many Years since, lived with his Wife in a conjugal state above 80 Years, as the present Minister of the place informed me: A Gentleman in *Stronsa*, who died about two Years since, was begotten of his Father when 100 Years old, this was attested by the Ministers who knew the truth thereof. One *William Muir* in *Westra* lived 140 Years, and died about 16 Years agoe, by a decay of Natures heat and vigour, incident to such an infirm decrepit age, without any ordinary Sicknels, as a Gentleman in these bounds well acquainted with him, told me. The disease they are most obnoxious unto is the Scurvey, occasioned, as is judged, by the Sea-Air, Fishes, Saltmeats &c. It is observed likewise that it is colder in the Summer time, then it is with us in the South, but warmer in the Winter, the Snow not using to ly long; For (beside other things that might be said on this head, which also respect other Countreys) in the summer cold breezes come off the Sea, which tempers the heat; And in the Winter season the same breezes may qualify the extreme cold and frost, which

Hence many old Persons.

They subject to the Scurvy.

The temperature of their Climate.



useth to be greatest, when the Air is most quietest, and least disturbed with Winds; The great motion also of the rapid Tides may contribute not a little thereunto.

Their  
Corns and  
Bread.

Their ordinary grains are Oats and Barley, and tho other grains should be sown, the product would not be great if any at all, they not taking with such a weak and cold soil, and the many brinish blasts these Isles ly exposed unto. As for Wheat-bread it is rare and scarce to be had, if not at *Kirkwall* and some Gentlemens Houses, who bring the flour from *Murray* or the South of *Scotland*. As for their Oats and Barley, the grain is less and blacker, then it is with us: Yea also they should bring good and fair seed from other Countreys; within a few years it would degenerate and become like their own; which is the reason why their Meal and Bread are of such a black colour. Yet in some places the Meal is whiter, and said to be better then in others. Their not being so diligent in winnowing their Corns, nor having such good Mills for grinding as we have, may be partly the cause thereof. In some place also they use not to shear their Corn, but plucks it up by the roots, as we do the Lint; because of the scarcity of fodder to their beasts, which Corns if not taken pains upon, will abound with sand and dust. Nevertheless for ought I hear or know, their Bread and Ale are wholesome, and the Natives take well with them. I thought; first when we Landed in *Orkney*, their Oat bread and Fleshes also, had some Fish-taste, but when we had tarried some Days there, we were not so sensible of it.

The na-  
ture of  
the Soil,  
and the  
Product  
thereof.

Their arable ground is better and more fertile, then at first to strangers appeareth, whence I heard some Gentlemen declare, it was wonderful to think, how great the product of these Isles is, considering the many barren mountains and much waste ground that are in them. They dung their Land for the most part with Sea-ware, which having gathered, they suffer to rot, either on the Coasts, or by carrying it up to the Land upon

upon Horses or on their backs, they lay it in heaps, till the time of labouring approach; Which is the reason, why the skirts of the Isles are more ordinarily cultivated, and do more abound with Corns, then places at a greater distance from the Sea, where they have not such gooding at hand. Their Ploughs are little and light, having only one fult, and but little iron in them; hence when at the end of the ridge, he who holds it lifts it up and carries it to the other side of the ridge, and if he please may carry it home on his shoulders: The reason they give of this is, that although some of their ground be strong, yet their beasts are weak and unable to go through with a plough of any considerable weight.

Their Horses, Kine, Sheep, Lambs &c. are of a lesser size then with us, and are to be bought at an easier rate, for a good Cow will be had for 5 *lib.* Scots, or 4 *lib.* 16 *lib.*, at which price they are obliged to sell her at *Kirkwall* about Martinmas. A good Wedder for 20 *sh.* Scots. A Hen for 2 *sh.* or 2 *sh.* 6d. &c.

Concerning their Cattel and their price:

The Sheep here are generally wild, therefore when they would have them taken, they ordinarily do it by Dogs trained for the purpose, the Owner of the Sheep giving to the Master of the Dog 2 *shill.* Scots for each one that is taken, and if they be not so wild but 1 *shill.* Some Husband Men told us, they would rather labour their Land over again, then take their Sheep when they would have them washen and shorn; I saw a young Man come from the hills wet and weary, having a long time pursued one to kill for our use. Their Kine are of divers colours, some white, others of a pyed, some red, others red and white &c. So that I think, there are as many of these colours, as are of a black. They have no Rivers, no place of the Land, being above 2. or 3. Miles distant from the Sea, therefore they draw water out of wells for their Cattel, or drives them to Lochs or Lakes, some whereof they

No Rivers, but some Brooks here, which cause their Mil's to go.



have, or to some small brooks which run from these Lochs: Which Lochs likewise cause their Mills to go.

Plenty of  
Cattel  
Butter and  
Milk.

They have abundance of Cattel in many places, whereby is afforded them plenty of Milk, which yeeldeth much Butter, some whereof is very good, yellow and sweet. but that which is called *Orkney Butter* at *Edinburgh*. is only their Farm-Butter, which they are obliged to pay to the Taxmen or Masters, whereof a quantity according to compact and agreement being gathered, they are at little or no trouble to make and keep it clean. Their Sheep also are very fruitful, many of them having two, and some three at a birth, which

*Boeth Hist. de Orcad.* as *Mr. Wallace* lately, so *Boethius* of old did observe,  
*Oves illic pene omnes geminos, immo trigeminos pleraque partus edunt.*

Their  
Fishes.

Fishes of divers sorts are taken in great plenty, yet not so numerous as formerly, for now before they catch their great fishes as Keelling, Ling &c. they must put far out into the Sea with their little boats, and thereby undergo great danger, which in former times they used to get nearer the Coasts: However such a number is taken, that beside what serves for their own supply, many are sent abroad to other Countrys for sale. Paticularly there are grey fishes, called Silluks, scarce half so big as a Herring generally, which sweem and are taken in great numbers upon the Coasts, so that sometimes they will sell 1000. of them for 6. or 7. *shill.* Scots. This fish is pleasant to the taste, and also they say, very wholesome, which seems to be confirmed by this, that in the late years of great scarcity, the poorer People lived upon them, almost as their only food, they often not enjoying a crum of Bread for many Weeks. So our good God, on the shutting of one door, opened another in his holy and wise Providence for the relief of the poor.

Herrings.

Herrings do sweem here in abundance, which formerly occasioned several Ships frequenting these Isles, but since the Battle of *Kilsyth*, they say, that Trade hath

hath failed; many of the *Enster Men*, who were ordinary fishers upon these Coasts, being killed there. When I was in *Papa Westra*, they pointed out to me a *Holm* upon the East side of the Isle, where I saw the ruines of some Huts or little Houses, whereunto these *Enster Men* sometimes resorted, during the Herring-fishing. A Gentleman living in this Isle told me, that the former Year 1699. there was a great quantity of Herring *Sperm* or *Spawn* driven upon the shore, and lay there for some time in heaps; which evidenceth that Herrings in their season, are yet on these Coasts: tho means be not used to take them.

Beside the many other excellent fishes, as Keeling, Ling, Scare, Turbot, and sometimes they say Sturgeon &c. there are also many Shell fishes taken; as Lobsters sold for an half penny or 4 pen. Scots; Oysters much bigger then with us, for 4 shill. Scots per 100. Partens and Mussels; and Cockles in so great plenty, that they make much good Lime of their shells, beside which they have no other Lime in *Orkney*, save what they bring from the South.

Many  
other good  
Fishes.

Lime made  
of Cockle  
shells.

They have plenty both of Land and Sea Fowls: as Eagles, Hawks, Ember-Goose, Claik-Goose, Dunter-Goose, Solen-Goose, Swans, Lyres, Scarffs, Ketiwaiks, Flover, Muir-Fowl, Duck and Drake &c. The King's Falconer useth to go every year to these Isles, taking the young Hawks and Falcons to breed, and every House in the Countrey is obliged to give him a Hen or a Dog, except such as are exempted. The Eagles do much hurt to the young Kore, falling down upon their Lambs and Hens, and taking them away with them to their Nests, Killing and pulling out the eyes and hearts of their Sheep; Hence there is an Act standing in the Steward's books, that whoever shall kill an Eagle, shall have a Hen out of every House of the Parish, where he is killed; yet notwithstanding of this encouragement, I hear but of few killed, they fleeing high, and dispatching their prey so quickly:

plenty of  
Fowls.



I saw a young one in the Palace of *Birsa*, almost twice the bigness of a Goose, tho not a month old, it is a ravenous fowl, and would have run upon us, if we had not kept it off with our staves. As to its colour, it is for the most part black, and something of a yellow or golden colour about the Head, and in some parts of the wings. It is observed of the Eagle, that he doth more destruction in places at some distance from his nest, then in these that are nearer it. Eagles, Hawks and such like fowls have their nests ordinarily, on some high, ragged rock, washed by the Sea beneath, some of which we saw as we had occasion to sail by them.

An account of  
the Ember-Goose.

The Ember-Goose tho not altogether so big as our Land-Goose, yet it useth to weigh a stone weight. It hath short wings, not able to bear up the body for fleeing, hence it is never teen flee, neither sit on any rock in the sea, as other Fowls do, but hath it's nest, wherein it hatcheth its Eggs, one or two at once, under the Water, at the foot of a rock, as they informed me, hath been found. It is of a darkish grey colour, and white about the neck, of broad feet like our Land-Goose, and a long beck and tho ever in the Water, yet hath not, I think, such a strong fish taste, as the Solen-Goose. It is more difficult to get them shot, then other Sea fowls, they being very quick-sighted, and on the 1<sup>st</sup>. apprehension of danger, get beneath the Water: Yea by reason of their many feathers, they will receive a shot on their breast, and it not penetrate: wherefore who would be at them, design for their Heads, or to shoot them against the And Lyre feathers. The Lyre is a rare and delicious Sea fowl, so very fat, that you would take it to be wholly fat; it is somewhat less then a Duck.

Sea-Fowls.

The Sea-fowls are so numerous, that a Gentleman numerous in *Westra* told his Minister, that some Years ago, he for his own part killed so many, as afforded him 50, 60. and some Years 100. stone weight of feathers,

(where-

(whereby accrues to the Owners more gain, then by the flesh of the fowls) tho for some seasons past, he hath taken but few; For it is observed, that these Fowls follow the small Fishes, which are their ordinary food, hence the mo Fishes, the mo Fowls, and when the Fishes forsake this and the other place, the Fowls likewise do so within a short time. Because of this abundance of Fowls, therefore it is, that the Gentlemen and some others have the rocks in several places divided among them, as they have their Land. Which Fowls they either kill by small shot out of Boats at the foot of the frequented rocks, or else Men are let down by ropes from the top of the rocks, who search for the Nests, taking the Eggs, and what Fowls they can apprehend. Many kinds of the Sea-Fowls are of a pyed colour, some of which are not to be found with us in the South.

There are here no Partridges, but plenty of Muir-Fowls, hence in some Isles they will take 20, 30. or 40. pair in one day, the hills covered with heather, being by Nature fitted for their living and accommodation. Conies also do abound in most of the Isles, but no Hares are to be seen, so that if any be brought into the Country, as they say, hath been tried, they will not live and propagate as in other places. I hear of few, if any venomous creatures in these Isles, as *Boethius* of old did observe, *Serpentes aut aliud animal venenosum nullum, id quod de Hibernia quoque verum est*: No Bees either are here, there being no provision proper for them, beside they would not take well with this cold Climate.

No Partridges, but abundance of Muir-Fowls.

No Hares, but Rabbits in abundance.

*Boeth. Hist. de Orcad.*

No venomous Creatures.

No Trees there are in this Countrey, nor Bushes, save a few in the Bishops Garden at *Kirkwall*, which are esteemed as a rarity, for when planted and taken care of, they sometime grow up the height of their Garden Wall, but afterwards they gradually go back and decay: This several Gentlemen very desirous of having Trees to grow, declared; Which then must be

No Trees.

im-



Buchan.

Hist. L. I.

imputed to the nature of the Soil, and sharpness of the Sea-air, and not to the sloth of the Inhabitants, as our Historian asserts, *Nulla usquam Arbor ac ne Frutex quidem præter Ericam. nec id tam calis aut soli vitio quam incolarum ignavia, quod facile ostenditur ex arborum radicibus, quæ pluribus in locis erantur.* For tho indeed it be true, that Roots, and sometimes Bodies of Trees, are found in Mosses; yet this is rare, and only to be had in some places; whereas Gentlemen say, they bring in exotick or foreign Plants, they sow Seed for Nurseries, which useth to arrive at some greater growth, then what is planted, yet after all their pains and expence in using such proper means, so conducive, for obtaining their end, no perfection or bearing of Fruit can be attained. And that Trees, which yet are but small, and look dry and withered, do grow in the Bishops Garden, may be because of its inclosure, having the Church on one side. the Town of *Kirkwall* on another, and the Bishops house on a third; Which kind of fences, may keep off the cold breezes, that come from the Sea, and destroy the growth of Trees in other places.

Good  
Roots.

Tho there be no Trees, and so no Fruits for the Table, yet there is no lack of good Roots for the Kitchen, as Cabbage, Carrots, Parsnipes, Turnipes, Crummocks, Artichoaks &c. All which useth to be bigger here then with us ordinarily; especially their Artichoaks excel, hence some Gentlemen do barrel and send them out of the Country for a present to their Friends. Beside these, they have likewise variety of Herbs in the field, very beneficial to such as understand their vertue and use.

Their few-  
el.

Pites and Turff are the ordinary fewel they use, which they have very good and in great plenty through the Country, except in some places, which do not so abound therewith, as in *Sanda* they are obliged to bring pites from the adjacent Isles, they not having in their own Isle to suffice them. And the usual man-

manner of agreement with the Proprietor of the Moss, is for so much a day, for so many Peits as a Man can cast. And in such places, where there is scarcity of Fewel, the poorer sort make use of dried Kine's dung, or Tangles, which in Summers heat they prepare for the Winters cold. They have a few Salt-Pans, in some places, where plenty of Pites, which are very useful to the Country. At some times, much Timber, the wrack of Ships cast away at Sea, or broken on their Isles, is driven ashore, which the Inhabitants seising keep for burnwood, and if good and fresh, (as sometimes Ships from Norway suffer Shipwrack upon or nigh to these Isles) they make other uses of it; I saw several Chimney-pieces thereof. The more ignorant People construct this as a favourable Providence to them, therefore they call these wracks, *God's send*, tho not so favourable to the poor Mariners and others who suffer thereby.

Although the Sea seemeth to favour them, by bringing such Timber, and sometimes Casks and Hogsheads of Wine, Brandy &c. to their doors, yet this turbulent swelling Sea, and strong Current of a Tide pays them home sore, for frequently thereby their small Passage or Fisher-Boats are cast away, sometimes all in them perishing, at other times some saved with difficulty. And at all times it is highly dangerous, for any not experienced with these Seas, to pass through between the Isles, tho with small Boats, because of the many blind Rocks lying there, upon which sometimes the Inhabitants themselves do spleet, what through some mistake, inadvertency, darkness of the night or otherwise.

The Ministers inform us, they are often in great danger in going to their Churches from Isle to Isle, Visiting their Parishes, going to the Presbytry, &c. Sometimes, pale death, with its grim countenance, presenting it self, and staring them in the Face, as one drawn out by the hair of the Head; another  
C
Even to the Inhabitant.
elcaping



escaping on the Keel of the overwhelmed Boat; Sometimes they are arrested by a storm in the Isles, and kept from their own Families for some weeks, even when the passage will be scarce a Mile or half a mile over. They tell us, in the Isle of *Westra*, there was a Marriage not long since, where about 100 Persons were conveyed from other Isles, and were detained for 6 or 7 weeks together, so that tho many of them daily saw their own houses, yet they durst not adventure to pass over, till the falling Wind and Sea took off their confinement.

*The Wart-Hill.* In every Isle there is a *Wart* or *Ward-Hill*, the highest Hill in the Isle, on the top whereof they used to kindle a fire, when they saw an Enemy approaching, or discerned any danger, that so they might alarm the Neighbourhood, that the dispersed Inhabitants of the Country having thereby notice given them might convene for their succour, or be upon their own Defence, which Beacons on the tops of Mountains the Scripture makes mention of, as *Isa. 30. 17.* And a late Learned Author asserteth, That great flame with smoke rising up out of the City, which was appointed as a sign between the Men of Israel, and the Lyers in wait. *Judg. 20. 38. 40.* seems to be meant by this.

*Edward's  
Scrip. stile  
Vol. 3.  
Chap. 4.*

*The Proprietors  
of the  
Country.*

There are several Gentlemen in *Orkney* who have considerable Estates, but the King is the great Proprietor, having about the one half of the Rents of the whole Country. Which Rents are let out to Taxmen, for so much per Annum, as is agreed upon at the publick Roup, who by their Deputes gather in the Revenues of the Crown, and being the Kings Stewards they are the principal Judges of the Country. The Rents when Collected, whether payed in Money, Meal, Oats, Barly or Butter are ordinarily sent South, which causeth a great grudge among the People, some of them thereby being redacted to great straits, not getting Meal, Barley or the like sometimes to buy, as in the late dearth, tho then the product of these Isles, comparatively

paratively, were beyond that of many other places in the Kingdom. The Bishops Rents amounting to 8 or 3000. *Merks per Annum*, and so more considerable then the Rents of several other Bishopricks in the Kingdom, now since the abolition of Prelacy coming in to the Kings Treasury and at his disposal, are also sent South and not consumed within the Isles, as they used formerly to be, when the Bishops resided here, at which the People are likewise dissatisfied, and thereby, as some better acquainted with their humours and inclinations do inform me, the Presbyterian Government is made the less acceptable to many of them.

The People greatly cry out of the Oppression they groan under, by reason of the frequent change of Stewards their Masters, who being Taxmen, and so only to continue for such a definite time, each endeavours to gather in his Rents, and that as soon as may be, which many of the poor People cannot get so quickly given, whereupon several of them are put to doors, and all taken from them, which hath occasioned much of the King's Land now to be lying waste and lee; Whereas if they always had one Master, their Circumstances might be much better; for sometimes it so falleth out, that the Husband-Man will gain as much in one year, as will compensate the loss of another, the Master likewise would be more encouraging to them, and concerned in their wellfare, and they having Leases set them, would more endeavour the improving of their ground, which now they do not, they not knowing, but the next year they may have a new Master, whose little Finger may be thicker then his Predecessours Loyns. Yet let not my Reader judge, that I hereby intend the Impeachment of any particular Person or Persons, who have been Taxmen there, or now are, but my design is to shew, that this is the common complaint of the Country both in Orkney and Zetland.

The Gentlemen tell us, they have another kind of Holding here, then is in other places, and the best right they

The People complain of oppression

Their Holding.



they have to their Lands, is that which they call *Udall right*, a Possession which the Natives successively have without either Charter or Seisin; All their Lands being either such *Udall Lands*, or *Kings Lands*, or *Ferred Lands*. This *Udall right* is said to be called from one *Ulas* King of *Norway*, who when he possessed the Countrey, gave to the Inhabitants a Right to so much Land, he always retaining to himself the 3d part, and enjoying the increase thereof.

Measure.

Their measure is not the same with ours, they not using Peck and Firiot, but in stead thereof, weigh their Corns on Pismires or Pundlers. The least quantity is called a Merk, which is 18 Ounces; 24 Merks make a Leispound or Setten, which with the *Danes* is that which we call a Stone. 6 Settens, a Meil, which is their Boll; And 18 Meils make a Chalder. Neither do they use Pecks or Sacks as we do; But carries and keeps their Corns and Meal in a sort of Vessels made of Straw, bound about with Ropes of the same, called *Cassies*.

Modern  
Account,  
of Den-  
mark.

### CHAP. III

Wherein the several Isles and Parishes belonging to *Orkney*, are enumerated, and briefly described.

**H**AVING given some description of *Orkney* in general, I shall now give some more particular account of the several Isles thereunto belonging. Which are divided into such as are Inhabited, and so are more commonly called *Isles*; And such as are not Inhabited, which they call *Holms*, only useful for Pasturage. The Isles are said to be 26 in number, viz. *Pomona* or the *Mainland* being much larger then any of the rest. Gramsey, Hoy, Swinna, South-Ronaldsha, Burra, Lambholm, Flotta, Faira, Cava, Copinsha, Shapinsha, Damsay,

The Number of the  
Orkney Isles

“say, Inhallo, Gairla, Roufa, Eaglesha, Stronfa, Papa-  
 “Stronfa, Eda, North-Faira, Westra, Papa-Westra,  
 “Wyre, Sanda, and North-Ronaldsha. To which may  
 be added *Paghland Skerries*, it being sometimes inhabit-  
 ed in the Summer time, and *Waes* which in a high  
 stream is divided from *Hoy*, whereunto it is joyned by  
 a low and narrow neck of Land; As also the *Calf* of  
*Eda*, it having a Salt Pan in it: It may be observed  
 that most of the Names of these Isles end in a *or-ey*,  
 which in the *Teutonick Tongue* signifieth Water, to shew  
 that theselves are pieces of Land surrounded with Water.

The first is *Pomona* or the *Mainland*, said to be 24 Miles in length from East to West, and in some places 6 or 8 Miles broad; nigh to the middle whereof is the Town of *Kirkwal*, about 3 quarters of a Mile in length from South to North, the only remarkable Town in all this Countrey, and beside which there is no other Royal-Burgh in *Orkney* or *Zetland*; The *Danes* who had the *Orcades* long in possession, called it *Cracoviaca*, which Name *Buchanan* takes to be the same with *Kirkwal* but corrupted. “Quod Dani Cracoviacam appellabant, nunc nomine corrupto Kircua Scotis dicitur. It standeth upon the North side of the *Isle* in a low and moist Ground, hence a Minister in this Countrey told me, that in several places of their large Church, where the more respected Burgers ordinarily Bury their Dead, they can scarce dig two foot of Earth but Water will arise, so that he hath seen when they Interred the Corps they behoved to press them down in the water till the Mold or Earth was cast upon them. It is now much decayed as to Trade and Number of Inhabitants, as many ancient Burghs in this Kingdom are. In it hath been two stately Edifices the *King's* and the *Bishops Palace*, the former is now very ruinous being the Ancientest of the two, built, as is thought, by some of the Bishops of *Orkney*; It having the vestige, of a Bishops Mitre and Armes Engraven, upon the Wall that looks to the street: And in which, it is said, the Bishops, of old, had

*Pomona* or  
 the *Main-  
 land*.  
 The Town  
 of *Kirkwal*  
 described.



had their Residence. The other, called the *Bishop's Palace*, wherein the Bishops lately lived, was built by *Patrick Stewart Earl of Orkney* Anno 1606, son to *Robert Stewart* Natural son to King James the 5th. This Palace is also going to Ruine; Tho, with some expence, it could be kept, in good Repair.

the Church  
of *Kirkwall*

The Church is a very noble and large structure; Having, in it, 14 or 15 strong Pillars, on each side, The steeple standing, on 4 bigger and higher Pillars, in the middle of the Church, wherein there are several old and good Bells. In the Easter part only, of this great Church, is Divine service performed, which is furnished with good seats, for accommodating the Inhabitants, and other conveniencies, proper for that end. It is commonly called *St. Magnus Church*; being built, or at least, as some say, the foundation laid, by *Magnus King of Norway*; Whom they report, to have been Buried here: Tho, others say, he was Buried in *Eagle-sha*, an Isle to the North of *Kirkwall*. There are many, of this name, of *Magnus*, in this Country.

A safe Road  
at *Kirkwall*

At *Kirkwall*, there is a safe Road; But Ships. coming from the South, cannot get so easily into it, by reason that the same Wind which brings them to *Orkney*, often will not suffer them to turn up to *Kirkwall*, they being obliged to encompass a point of Land stretching to the North-East before they can make the Road, so that frequently they ly at *Elwick* or *Deer-sound* two Anchoring places to the East or North-East of *Kirkwall*, until that the Wind shall favour them.

Goodgrafs  
and Corn,  
in some  
places of  
the *Main-*  
*land*.

The Kings  
House in  
*Birsa*

On the *Mainland* good Corns do grow in several places, tho likeways there be much moorish Ground, but the pleasantest part of the Isle I take to be the West end thereof, about *Birsa*, *Hara*, *Sandwick* and *Scromness*, where there are several spots well furnished with Grass and Corn. In the Parish of *Birsa* is the Kings House situated on a plain Champain Ground on the West end of the *Mainland*, nigh to the sea or *Deucalionian Ocean*, which former-

formerly when in order hath had several pleasant and diverting Avenues about it. At a large quarter of a Miles distance to the south, we saw the pleasantest mixture of Gowans so commonly called or Daisies white and yellow on every side of the way growing very thick, and covering a considerable piece of the Ground; that ever we had occasion to see. The Palace was Built in form of a Court by *Robert Stewart Earl of Orkney*, about the Year 1574, it is two stories high, the upper hath been prettily decored, the Ceiling being all Painted, and that for the most part with schemes holding forth scripture-Histories, as *Noah's Flood*, *Christ's Riding to Jerusalem* &c. And the scripture is set down beside the Figure: It was Inhabited within these 20 Years, but is now fast decaying. When we entered the Palace gate, we saw above it, that Inscription so much talkt of, and reputed treasonable by *King James the 6th*: *Robertus Stewartus Filius Jacobi 5<sup>ii</sup> Rex Scotorum hoc Ædificium instruxit*, which inscription could not but offend the lawful Heir of the Crown, for it cannot well be thought that the Earl and all about him, were such blunderers in the Latine Tongue as to put down *Rex* in stead of *Regis*, if there had been no design in it. Within the Palace we saw also the Motto above his Arms, *Sic fuit, est, & erit*. which was a piece of too great arrogancy for any Man to assume, that unto himself, which properly belongs to the Son of GOD, whose wise Judgement is not unworthy of our Remark, that now only it can be said of his House and Family, now extinct. *Dan. 4. 37. Sic fuit*: Which that great King *Nebuchadnezar* knew to his experience, *That these who walk in pride, God is able to abase.*

Among other pleasant places in this West end of the Mainland we may take notice of *Kirfal-Hill*, a litle to the East of the House of *Brachness* in the Parish of *Sandwick*, which is very large on the top, and plain almost like a Bowling-Green, so that 9 or 1000 Men could easily be drawn up in order thereupon: It is all over very green

*Kirfal Hill*



*Loch of  
Stennis.*

green without any Heath or such like growing there neither are there any rising Hillocks on it, that we could discern, as ordinarily are to be seen on other Hills; and because of it's being so very pleasant the Inhabitants about call it *Cheerful-Hill*. Within a few Miles also of the West-end of the *Mainland* is the *Loch of Stennis* the largest in *Orkney*, whereon are some Mills; some Trouts, and Salmon-Giltes are found in it, and the Brooks that run from it.

Several  
good Har-  
bours on  
the *Main-  
land*.

Beside *Kirkwall-Road*, there are several other Harbours or Bays on the *Mainland*, wherein Ships can safely ly, as one at *Kerfion* a small Village, at the West-end of the *Mainland*, much frequented by Ships going to the West of *Scotland*, or *Ireland*, or coming therefrom: Another is at *Helms-sound* towards the South-East side of the Isle, to which sometimes Barks do resort from the South; several Ships also going through Land from the South to the West-Sea, drop Anchor here; and when they pass, they must Sail between *Lambholm* a little Isle in the *Sound*, and the *Mainland*; for the way on the other side between *Lambholm* and *Burra*, tho it seem more open, yet it is, they say, shallow and dangerous: But none I think will dare to Sail through these Isles without some measure both of skill and experience, else it will be to the hazard of their lives, and the loss of Ship and Cargo; There being several Turnings, Blind-Rocks, and Shallows: Wherefore many do judge it the safest Course, to keep the Wide-Sea. and so Sail without the Isles, especially if the Weather be not well set and promising. Another convenient Road is at *Deer-sound* to the East of the *Mainland* where a great Bay commodious for Navies to ride in. Some other Harbours and Bays also there are upon the *Mainland*, but these are the most remarkable.

A Ship cast  
away.

Nigh to the point of *Deer-Ness* some Years ago was cast away a Ship transporting some Prisoners to *America*, who were for the most part West-Country Men apprehended, Emprisoned and then Banished for adhering to Presbyterian Principles; There were, as is said, about

above 100 who Perished being kept under the Hatches, tyed together by pairs, whereas if they had been at liberty, the greatest part if not all might have been saved, as a few were, then upon Deck, with the Mariners. The Countrey People here did and do think that the Captain of the Ship willingly suffered her to drive upon this point, and the Men there to Perish, and if so, it is probable that others tho not Aboard, have been concerned in this mischievous desing, as the Authors and Abettours thereof.

In the Mainland are 7 Parishes but 13 Kirks, for many Ministers in Orkney have 2 and some 3 Kirks, wherein they ordinarily Preach by turns, the first is *Deerness* and *St Andrews* at the East-end of the Isle, where two Kirks, one at *Deerness* and another at *St Andrews*, wherein their Minister Preacheth by turns, here live the Laids of *New-work* and *Tankerness*; Under this Ministers inspection also is *Copinsha* a litle Isle to the East of the Main, wherein a few Families, some Corn-Land and Pasturage: It at a litle distance appears to be as an high Rock conspicuous to Sea-Men, but it declineth and lieth low towards the West: To the North East of it lieth a Holm called the *Horse* of *Copinsha*.

The next Parish is *Holm*, also on the East of the Main to the West of *Deerness* and *St Andrews*, wherein is but one Kirk; In this Parish liveth the Laird of *Grahamsh-hall*. To their Ministers Charge belongeth *Lambholm* a litle Isle to the South of the Main, wherein a Familie or two. North-West from *Holm*, the Parish and Town of *Kirkwall* lieth, where one Church, but they should have two Ministers. A part of their Charge is called the Parish of *St Ola*. To the West of *Kirkwall* is *Orphir*, where is but one Kirk. To the North-West of *Kirkwall* lieth *Firth* and *Stennis* having two Kirks, wherein their Minister Preacheth *per vices* or by turns. To this Parish belongs *Damsey*, a litle Isle. To the North of *Firth* and *Stennis*, is *Evie* and *Renaal* having two Kirks, wherein their Minister Preacheth *per vices*, To this

The Isle of  
*Copinsha*.

The Isle of  
*Lambholm*.

The Isle of  
*Damsey*.



The Isle of  
*Gairsey.*

Parish belongeth *Gairsey* a litle pleasant Isle, wherein liveth Sir *William Craig* of *Gairsey*

To the West of *Evie* and *Rendal* is *Hara* and *Birsa*, where are two Kirks, in which the Minister Preacheth per vices; the King's House is in *Birsa* as abovesaid. Next to *Birsa* to the South-West is *Sandwick* and *Stromness*, wherein are two Kirks, which their Minister goeth to per vices. To *Stromness* belongeth *Kerston*, where the best Harbour in *Orkney*, and by reason it is daily increasing as to Houses and number of Inhabitants, (who are encouraged to dwell here upon the account of the many Ships that do frequent this Port, and often tarry for sometime;) the Minister and Gentlemen concur in supplicating Judicatories competent, that *Kerston* with some of the Countrey adjacent, may be erected into a Parish by it self, that so the Inhabitants of the place and strangers resorting thereunto, may be served with Preaching, and other parts of the Pastoral Work; their present Church at *Stromness* being 4 Miles distant from them, wherein also they can have Sermon, but every other Sabbath. In *Sandwick* lives the Laird of *Brachness*.

The Isle  
of *Hoy*, and  
*Waes*.

To the South of *Stromness* and *Sandwick* lieth *Hoy* and *Waes*, which ordinarily make but one Isle, tho sometimes by a high Sream overflowing the low and narrow passage. whereby they are joyned to one another. they are divided into two; The Isle is about 10 or 12 Miles long from West to East. *Waes* at the East-end of the Isle is better inhabited, then *Hoy* at the West-end thereof, it lying lower, and so fitter for Pasturage and labouring, whereas *Hoy* is more Mountainous, only having some Houses on the skirts of the Hills, by the Coasts, and some Corn Land about their Houses. The Hill of *Hoy* is the highest in *Orkney*, whence we have a fair prospect of all the circumjacent Isles, as also of *Caithness* *Stranaver*, *Sutherland* &c. On the South side of *Psightland Firth*, yet tho it be so high, it cannot hold true what some do assert, that from this Hill is to be seen the Sun all the Night over in the Moneth of June when he is

is about the Tropick of Cancer, for seeing the Sun is for several hours seen above the Horizon the shortest Day of Winter, he must necessarily be so far depressed, the shortest Night in Summer, so that his Body cannot then be seen, tho something of a clear light may be discerned, as it were accompanying the Sun from his setting to his rising point, by reason of the reflexion and refraction of his Rayes upon and through the Sea, he dipping so little below their Horizon: For the further Illustrating of this, the Ministers of the Northern-Isles of Orkney told me, that in the Moneth of June they will see to Read small Print or Write at mid-night; And in December for some Dayes they can neither see to Read nor Write, unless that they light a Candle, as one of them attested from his experience. To the South of the Entry into the Sound between Hoy and Kerfion in the Mainland is the Comb of Hoy, the highest Rock in Orkney, looking to the West or Deucalidenian Ocean much frequented by Sea-Fouls.

The Minister of Hoy hath two Kirks, one in Hoy and another in Gramsey, a little pleasant Isle about a Mile long, lying to the North of Hoy, between it and Kerfion in the Mainland, but Ships that go through this Sound use to Sail between Gramsay and the Mainland, the way between Gramsay and Hoy being very dangerous. The Minister of Waes hath two Kirks, one in Waes and another in Flotta, a pleasant little Isle, and as capable of improvement as any Isle in Orkney; Faiva and Cava also two other little Isles are a part of his Charge, these Isles ly to the East of Waes and Hoy.

Nigh to the East of Waes and Hoy lyes South-Ronaldsha 5 Miles long from North to South, and about two broad in several places, it is the Southernmost of all the Isles of Orkney, and very Fertile and populous, at the South-end thereof is Burwick, whence the ordinary passage is to Duncanskey in Caithness over Pightland Firth. Their Minister hath three Kirks, two in South-Ronaldsha, one at the South-end of the Isle, called our Lady's-



*Kirk.* and another at the North-end called *St Peter's*  
 The Isle of *Kirk*. He hath a 3<sup>d</sup> *Kirk* in *Burra* a pleasant litle Isle to  
*Burra.* the North of *South-Ronaldsha*, wherein much Cornland,  
 and many Rabbets: In this Isle liveth Sir *Archbald*

The Isle of *Stewart*. To this Parish belongs *Swinna* a litle Isle in  
*Swinna.* *Pightland-Firth*, of which more afterward, when we  
 come to discourse of *Pightland-Firth*.

The Isle of To the North of the *Mainland* lyes the Northern Isles.  
*Shapinsha.* as *Shapinsha* to the North-East 4 or 5 Miles long, to  
 this Parish belongs but one *Kirk*. It hath a safe Har-  
 bour at *Elwick* on the South of the Isle: Here is the  
 House of the *Souna* which looketh well, and hath a pleasant  
 Situation on a rising Ground, lying to the South.

Isles of To the North-East, from *Shapinsha* lyeth *Sironsa* a-  
*Stronsa,* bout 4 or 5 Miles long, it is well Inhabited, and the  
 and *Papa* Grass and Corns are good: *Papa-Stronsa* is a litle Isle  
*Stronsa.* over against it towards North-East, wherein but one  
 Family, between *Papa-Stronsa* and *Stronsa* is a safe Har-  
 bour or Bay, well fenced by Promontories or Capes of  
 Land, it is said to be the best North-bound Harbour in  
 all the Northern Isles. Opposite to *Stronsa* to North-

The Isle of West lyes *Eda* about 4 Miles of length from North to  
 of *Eda.* South, it is full of Moss and Moor, and but thinly In-  
 habited: Some of the Neighbouring Isles get their Pites  
 hence. In it a Loch and Mill. To the North-East of  
*Eda* is the *Calf*, a Holm so called; between which and  
*Eda* is *Calf-Sound* a convenient and safe Road. The Minis-  
 ter of *Stronsa* and *Eda* hath two Kirks one in *Stronsa* and  
 another in *Eda*, where he Preacheth every 3<sup>d</sup> Sabbath,  
 To the West of *Eda* lyes *North-Farra* a litle pleasant Isle,  
 wherein a few Families.

The Isle of  
*North-Far-  
 ru.*

On the East side of *Eda*, stands a House built by  
 The House of *John Stewart* Earl of *Carrick*, An. 1633. Some of  
 of *Calf-* whose Off spring are yet living in the neighbouring  
*Sound.* Isles, the occasion of his coming and living in this re-  
 mote corner, is reported to have been some discontent  
 which fell out between him and his Lady; He built at  
 a great Expence 12 Salt-Pans in the *Calf* of *Eda*, over  
 against

against his house, which for some time were all at Work, he designing to have driven a Foreign Trade with his Salt, but he dying after a few years abode there, the House and Pans not being kept in Repair went to ruine, so that now only one Salt-Pan is standing. Thus his Project died with himself.

To the N. East of *Eda* is *Sanda* the pleasantest I think, of the *Orkney* Isles, 9 or 10 Miles long from South to North, in many places a Mile or a mile and an half, and in some scarce half a mile broad, having several tongues of Land washed by the Sea; hence some do compare it to the shape of a Lobster: No place in the Isle is high and Mountainous, and many spots of it are very plain, and even like a Bowling-Green, everywhere it is well furnished with Grass, and much good Corn, said to be the best in *Orkney*; It alone payeth to the King 42 Chalders of Victual, every one of which Chalders is 21 Bolls of our Measure; The whole Isle is but as one rich Cuningar or a Cony-Warren, for I never saw a greater number of Conies running in any place then I did here; Hence the Heretors kill several hundreds of them yearly for their use. There are several Bays for Ships as *Kisletoft*, *Osterswick* and *Taphneß Bay*: Some Gentlemen also who have considerable Interests as *Burgh*, *Lapneß &c*: Many Fowls frequent this Isle, as Duck and Drake, Plover, &c. So that there is good sport for the Fowler. The Stir-lins or Starés are as numerous I judge, as the Sparrows are with us.

In *Sanda* are two Ministers, one having one Kirk called *Lady-Kirk*, on the East side of the Isle towards the North end thereof, in this Isle are some sober, knowing, and good People; particularly in this Lady Parish in the former Presbyterian times, there was a Godly Zealous Minister, Mr. *Arthur Murray*, who went South after the Revolution An. 1660 and died there, some of the old people yet alive, who were under his Ministry cannot speak of him without Tears

The



The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. The other Minister hath under his inspection three Kirks, two in *Sanda*, *Croß Kirk*, and *Burness*, and one in *North-Ronaldsha*, an Isle to the North of *Sanda* two or three Miles long. Both these Isles of

The Isle of  
*Sanda* and  
*North-Ronaldsha*.

ly low, and dangerous for Seamen, who cannot discover them at any distance especially in a misty day or dark night, till close upon them, and so are ready to suffer Ship-wrack, as many do:

The Isle of  
*Westra*.

To the West of *Sanda* lies, *Westra* seven Miles long it is well Inhabited, having much Corn in it; here is *Fitta Hill* where they say the Fairies are frequently seen, it is the highest hill in all the Northern Isles of *Orkney*. In the North end of this Isle is the Castle of *Noutland*, built by *Gilbert Balfour* for the use of

The Castle  
of *Nout-*  
*land*.

*James Hepburn* Earl of *Bothwell*, Married to *Queen Mary* the 27 of *May An. 1567* in the *Abbey of Holy-Roodhouse* who fearing he should not always retain and enjoy his present Grandure, which the Nobles envied him for, he likewise being suspected guilty of the Murder of my Lord *Darlia* her former Husband, caused build this strong Castle, which upon a change of the Scene. he might betake himself unto, situated upon a Rock nigh to the *Deucaledonian Ocean*, having plain *Champaign* ground about it; It is 4 Stories high, and the lowest is strongly Vaulted, above, which is a large Hall, having two Air-holes through the Arch, so to give a vent to the Powder, if at any time they should be surpris'd with a blast, the walls are very thick, and all the free stone for the building was brought from the South: The Roof is flat and fenced with Rayls of Stone, whence we have a fair view of the circumjacent Country, There are several hols or slits in the Building, not only to let in the light, but to gall an approaching Enemy with small shot, if at any time they should be attacked: But the Lord often taking the Sinner in his own craftiness, suffered

suffered him not so to escape, by sheltering himself in this Nest; This Castle was never compleated, for in one part thereof, the Walls are but half the height intended, and never hitherto covered with a Roof, and he being pursued by the Lords of the Congregation, never possessed it, or so much as saw it, if not at a distance, for he taking himself to Sea with two or three Ships came to *Kirkwal* in *Orkney*, and being driven thence by *William Kircaldy* of *Grange*, he fled to *Zetland*, where the Pursuer had almost overtaken him, if the Pilots skill in these Seas had not made a way to escape, in holding down by the side of a blind Rock well enough known to the Pilot, which the Pursuer ignorant of spleet upon; which Rock to this day is called the *Unicorn*, from the Name of the Ship that perished upon it. *Bothwel* escaped to *Norway* where being apprehended, he was taken to *Denmark*, and cast into a filthy Prison, where he died after 10 years Imprisonment: His wicked life having this miserable end: Tho hand join in hand the wicked shall not go unpunished; and ordinarily Murder, (whereof he was suspected to be guilty,) so cryeth from the ground, that it bringeth down remarkable and often tremendous Judgments in time. There are several Gentlemens Houses in *Westra*.

The Minister of *Westra* hath three Churches wherein he Preacheth *per vices*, two in *Westra*, one at the west end of the Isle called the *West-Kirk*, and another nigh to the North end called the *North-Kirk*, the third Church is in *Papa-Westra* a little Isle of 3 Miles long from South to North; Betwixt it, and *Westra* there is a convenient Harbour for Ships at *Pirna*; As also in the same Sound a little to the North of this Harbour lyes a holm wherein there hath been a little Chapel, whereof some of the ruinous Walls are yet to be seen. *Papa-Westra* aboundeth with Rabbits, and hath some Corn Land, but not so much as some other Isles, it being hard and stonny ground; It belongeth to a Gentleman

The Isle of  
*Papa-*  
*Westra*.



leman called *Holland*, and hath been reputed famous for *St. Trodwell's Chappel* and *Loch* or *Lake*. To the East of this Isle lyeth the *Holm*, where the *Enster Men* had their *Hutts* as above.

The Isle  
of *Rousa*.

To the South of *Westra* lyes *Rousa* an Isle 6 Miles long, full of heathy Hills, abounding with Moor-Fowls, there is not much corn in it, and but thinly inhabited. There is a *Loch* and *Mill* thereon that goeth ordinarily all the Summer over, which is rare in these Isles. The Minister of *Rousa* hath two Kirks, one in

The Isle of  
*Eglesha*.

*Rousa* and another in *Eglesha*, a pleasant Isle two Miles long, where a Church much frequented by superstitious People with a high Steeple seen at a great distance, where, (as some would have it,) *St. Magnus* was buried.

The Isle  
of *Inhallo*.

To his Charge also belongs *Inhallo*, a little Isle to the West of *Rousa*, also *Wyre* a small Isle.

The Num-  
ber of  
Parishes.

Thus I have glanced at the Description of the *Orca-des*; most of which I have had occasion to see, wherein we see there are 17. Parishes, 8. in the Mainland, Viz. *Kirkwall*, *Holm*, *Deerness* and *St. Andrews*, *Evie* and *Rendal*, *Firth* and *Stennis*, *Orphir*, *Birs* and *Hara*, *Sandwick* and *Scromness*, and 9. in the other Isles, Sciz. *South Ronaldsha* and *Burra*, *Waes* and *Flotta*, *Hoy* and *Gramsey*, *Shapinsha*, *Sironsa* and *Eda*, *Lady Kirk* in *Sanda*, *Cross Kirk* and *Burness* in *Sanda*, and *North Ronaldsha*, *Westra* and *Papa Westra*, *Rousa* and *Eglesha*; But there are 31. Kirks; And these Ministers look upon themselves as more happily posted, who have only one Kirk, especially if they have not more Kirks in several Isles, this tending more to the Edification of the People under their Charge, and consequently to their peace and encouragement, they every Lords-Day dispensing Ordinances in the same place, to the same People, whereas these who have more Kirks committed to them are sometimes obliged to preach in one place and sometimes in another, and the People generally frequent but their own Kirk, especially if they be in different Isles, hence ordinarily they enjoy the Ordinances

nances only every other Sabbath, and in some places but one of three, which cannot but obstruct the progress of the Gospel, among them. Besides it is uneasy, expensive and dangerous for them to travel from Isle to Isle, and sometimes a storm arising they are necessarily detained there. The stipends here are small, and for the most part payed by the Stewart or his Depute, the King being the principal Proprietour, yet they can live very well upon them, Victuals being had at an easie rate.

The People are generally tractable, submissive and respectful to their Ministers, which is very desirable and encouraging to these who labour among them, when true Zeal enlargeth the desires, and putteth an edge upon the Spirits of Pastors in the discharge of the Lord's Work for the good of Souls.

People respectful of their Ministers.

#### C H A P. I V.

Some things remarkable in *Orkney*, as Ancient Monuments, strange Providences &c. are represented.

**H**AVING taken a view of the Countrey in general, and the several Isles in particular, I shall now divert my Reader with some things remarkable, not altogether unworthy of our Observation, such as some Ancient Monuments, strange Accidents, and some other things not only curious and delectable, but also profitable to the judicious; affording matter "of meditation to the wise Observers of these things, who regard the Works of the Lord, and duely ponder the operation of his hands, in the years of Ancient and Latter times.

Things remarkable in *Orkney*.

The first we take notice of is the Stone, called the Dwarfie Stone, lying in a Valley between two Hills, to the North of the Hill of Hoy, it is about 34. foot long, 16. or 17. broad and 8. thick, hollowed by the hand

The Dwarfie Stone.



of some Mason, as the Print of the Mason-Irons do yet shew, it hath a square hole for the Entry, looking to the East, 2. foot high, with a stone proportionable standing before this Entry at 2. foot distance, within at one end is hewen out a bed with a pillow, wherein two Persons may ly almost at their full length, opposite to this at the other end, is something also hewen out like a Couch, between which Bed and Couch there is a large Hole above about the bigness of the Entry, through which a Person may come up to the top of the Stone, and might serve, for a Vent to the smoke, if so be they had put any fire upon a Hearth between the two Beds. Beneath this stone runs to the South a cold and pleasant spring which might afford drink to the Inhabitant. Who hewed this stone, or for what use it was we could not learn, the Common Tradition among the People is, That a Giant with his Wife lived in this Isle of *Hoy*, who had this stone for their Castle. But I would rather think, seeing it could not accomodate any of a Gigantick stature, that it might be for the use of some Dwarf, as the Name seems to import, or it being remote from any House might be the retired Cell of some Melancholick Hermite. The stone also may be called the *Dwarfe Stone*, per *Antiphrasin* or by way of Opposition it being so very great.

Some-  
thing  
shines  
wonder-  
fully on  
the *Wart-  
Hill* of  
*Hoy*.

To the North West of this Stone is an high Mountain of a steep Ascent called the *Wart-Hill* of *Hoy*, looking to the North; Nigh to the top of which Hill about Mid-Day, is seen something and that at a good distance, which glitters and shines wonderfully, and tho some have climbed up and searched for it, yet could find nothing: It shines most in the summer time: The People talk of it as some enchanted Carbuncle: Others take it to be a Water that reflecteth the Sun's Rays, and so causeth such a sparkling and splendour; But a Gentleman who liveth nigh to this  
Rock

Rock told us, that it shines most in the greatest Drought, when no Water is near it.

At the West end of the Mainland, about a Mile and an half to the West of the House of *Skeal*, on the top of high Rocks, there is something like a street, near to a Quarter of a Mile in length, and between 20, and 30. foot in breadth, all laid with Stones of different Figures and Magnitudes, of a Reddish colour: some of which stones bear the Image and Representation of a *Heart*, others of a *Crown*, others of a *Shoe*, a *Leg*, a *Left*, a *Weavers Shuttle* &c. And that which renders it yet the more strange is, when these stones are raised many of them have the same figure and shape below on the one side, that they have above on the other; which street all beholders look on as very wonderful. I saw a part of the Garden Wall of the House of *Skeal*, decorated in the forepart thereof with these stones, we intended to have sent a parcel of them South to our Friends as a rarity, if they had not been forgot at our return from *Zetland*. Whether these stones be so laid and figured by Art or by Nature will be hard to determine. For there is no House nigh to this street, neither are the ruins of any which formerly have been there, to be seen. So puzzling are the Works of God to the most ingenious and accurate observers of Providence.

At the Loch of *Stennis* in the Mainland, in that part thereof, where the Loch is Narrowest, both on the West and East side of the Loch, there is a Ditch; within which there is a Circle, of large and high stones erected: The larger Round is on the West side, above 100 paces Diameter: the Stones set about in form of a Circle within a large Ditch, are not all of a like quantity and Size, tho some of them, I think, are upwards of 20. foot high above ground, 4. or 5. foot broad, and a foot or two thick, some of which stones are fallen, but many of them are yet standing, between which there is not an equal distance, but many

A street  
of stones  
of different  
figures.

A Circle  
of stones.



of them are about 10. or 12. foot distant from each other. On the other side of the Loch over which we pass by a Bridge laid with stones after the manner of a street, the Loch there being shallow, are two stones standing, of a like bigness with the rest, whereof one hath a round hole in the midst of it, at a little distance from which stones, there is another Ditch, about half a Mile from the former, but of a far less Circumference, within which also there are some stones standing, something bigger then the other stones on the West side of the Loch, in form of a Semicircle, I think rather then of a Circle, opening to the East, for I see no stones that have fallen there save one, which when standing, did complete but the Semicircle. Both at the East and West end of the bigger Round, are two green Mounts, which appear to be Artificial: In one of which Mounts were found, saith Mr. Wallace, 9. Fibula of silver, round, but opening in one place like to a Horse-shoe.

Mr. Wal-  
lace De-  
scription  
of Orkney.

It is most probably thought that, these were the High-Places in times of Pagan Idolatry, whereon sacrifices were offered, and that the two Artificial Mounts of Earth, served for the same purpose, or were the places where the Ashes of the Sacrifices were cast, as some will have it. Boethius in the Life of Mainus King of Scots observeth, That the People called these huge stones drawn together in the form of a Circle, the Ancient Temples of the Gods, *Ut Populus ad Religionem moverentur priscis sacris novas quasdam & solennes Ceremonias superaddidit (Rex nimirum Mainus). Deus immortalibus peragendas, ut immensis saxis variis in Regionum locis (ut res exposcebat) in coronidem admotis, eorumque maximo ad Meridiem porrecto, cuius pro ara foret usus: Victimæ ibi Deus immortalibus sacrificium cremarentur. Extant in res fidem, vel hoc nostro ævo ingentia ea saxa ducta in Circos, prisca Deorum Phana Vulgus appellat.* Many of the Countrey do say, That in the larger Round the Sun,

Boeth. in  
vitam  
Maini.

Sun, and in the lesser the Moon was Worshipped by the old Pagan Inhabitants of these Isles.

And indeed to build their Altars of earth or unpolished Stones seems to have been the custom of Ancient times, and even of the first Ages of the *Rom: Empire*, as the Learned *Spencer* endeavours to prove from "Ter-  
 tullian, *Et si a Numa concepta est curiositas superstitio-  
 sa, nondum tamen aut Simulacris aut Templis res  
 Divina apud Romanos constabat. Frugis Religio &  
 pauperes ritus, & nulla Capitolia certantia coelo; sed  
 temeraria de cespite Altaria, & vasa adhuc Sarnia, &  
 nidor ex illis, & Deus ipse nusquam.* *And further  
 confirming the same from Cluverius writing of the German  
 Antiquities.* And concludes with giving the Reason why the Gentiles of old were so taken with rude, indigested, artless and unpolished Altars and places of worship, because they Judged them more holy and more acceptable to the Gods: "Gentes antiquæ, faith  
 he, *Natura vel Traditione doctæ, naturalia omnia  
 rudia licet & impolita, sanctiora & Diis suis gratiora  
 crediderunt.* And here in these Monuments nothing like Art or Form: the Stones are not polished nor all of a like thickness, height or breadth, nor of an equal distance from each other.

*Apologues  
 Chap. 25.*

*Spencer.  
 de Legibus  
 Hebrao-  
 rum.*

In the Isle of *Sanda* there is a Chappel called the *Great Chappel of Clet*, wherein there is a Grave 19: foot long, *bones found in Sanda.* which when opened some years ago, there was nothing found in it save the piece of a Back-bone of a Man, greater then the Back-bone of any Horse. This the Minister of the place declared unto me, who saw the Grave opened, and measured it from the Head to the Foot stone thereof, who also for some time had the Bone in his Custody. The vulgar Tradition is that there was a Giant there, who was of so tall a stature that he could have stood upon the ground and put the Copstone upon the Chappel, which no Man now living by far could do.

There are also Bones found in *Westra* between *Tukey* *And in Westra.*  
 and



and the *West Church*, as great as Horse-bones, as the Minister of *Westra* informed me. And some there have been lately of a Gigantick stature in these Isles: As that Man who died not long since, whom for his height they commonly called the *Meikle Man of Waers*.

several  
Obelisks  
through  
the Coun-  
treys.

Through this Countrey we find several *Obelisks* or very high and great stones set up, as one in the Isle of *Eda*, another on the Mainland within a Mile of *Birsa* &c. they appear to be much worn, by the washing of Wind and Rain, which shewes they are of a long standing, and it is very strange to think how in these places and times they got such large stones carried and erected.

*Boeth. in  
vitam  
Magni.*

“Mirabile profecto quisquis ea spectaverit, quâ arte quibus Corporis viribus lapides tantâ mole in unum locum fuerint congesti. The Reason and End of their setting up cannot be certainly known, however we may conjecture, that probably it was in remembrance of some famous Battle, or hath been the Ancient Funeral Monuments of some renowned Persons, who have fallen in Battle or been buried there. Several of which stones and Monuments are to be seen in many places through *Scotland*; and in *Norway* they are very common, as our Travellers who have seen them, inform me. And it is like these stones have been set up by the Norwegians, when they possessed this Countrey.

The Bi-  
shops of  
*Orkney* at  
their, 1st.  
Landing  
used to be  
presented  
with a  
large Cup  
full of  
strong  
drink.

In *Scapha* about a Mile from *Kirkwall* to South-West it is said there was kept a large and ancient Cup, which they say, belonged to *St Magnus King of Norway*, who first instructed them in the Principles of the *Christian Religion* and founded the *Church of Kirkwall*, with which full of some strong drink their Bishops at their first Landing were presented; which if he drank out, they highly praised him, and made themselves to beleive, that they should have many good and fruitful Years in his time. This *Buchannan* relates. and as Mr. *Wallace* observeth, is still believed there, and talkt of as a truth. “*Scyphum habent antiquum, faith Buchannan, quem Divi Magni, qui primus ad eos Christi doctrinam attulit, fuisse prædicant*

“cant; Is cum ita superet communium Poculorum ampli-  
 “tudinem, ut e Lapitharum Convivio reservatus videri  
 “possit, eo suos Episcopos initio ad se adventantes ex-  
 “plorant: Qui plenum uno haustu ebiberit (quod  
 “admodum raro evenit) miris eum laudibus prose-  
 “quuntur, atque hinc velut læto Augurio sequentium  
 “Annorum proventum animis præcipiunt. The Countrey  
 to this Day have the Tradition of this, but we did not  
 see the Cup; Nor could we learn where it was. And  
 indeed that which renders this the more credible, is  
 that the *Norwegians* at present as Merchants and Mari-  
 ners inform us, have a custom like unto this, that if any  
 come to pay them a visite, especially if they be strangers,  
 they use to present them with a large Cup full of drink  
 which they take not well, if their guests drink not out.  
 They say, some of these Cups will contain three  
 Mutchkins, others a Pint, and some a Quart of our  
 Measure.

The Sea in  
 a storm  
 beats most  
 vehement-  
 ly on the  
 Rocks.

The Wind, and Sea, in any storm beats most tem-  
 pestuously and vehemently, here upon the Rocks: a  
 little to the West of *Kerston* in the *Mainland*, there is a  
 Rock called the *Black Craig of Stromness*, about 70 Fath-  
 oms high; Upon which in a Storm the Sea from the  
*Deucalionian Ocean* doth beat with such violence and  
 force, that the Waves breaking thereupon, cause the Wa-  
 ter to rise to the top of the Rock like Snow and flee like  
 a whit Sheet before the Wind. blasting the Corns for 3  
 or 4 Miles behind the Rock, if it fall out in, or a little  
 before Harvest; And this it doth likewise in several  
 other places of the Countrey, as some Gentlemen who  
 knew it to their experience, did declare. Yea so great  
 is the violence of these Tempestuous Seas, that thereby  
 some great Stones are cast out, and others are worn, so that  
 large Caves in some places run from the Sea within the  
 Rock, beneath the Ground for some considerable way,  
 I saw one of these at the East-end of the *Mainland* in the  
 Parish of *Holm*, it is all covered above with the Rock  
 and Earth, save that within these few Years, some of the

Rock



Rock and Earh fell in, or was blown up ( as they call it ) in one night, by a violent Storm blowing from South East, hence now there is a hole in the Hill above, like the Eye of a Coal-pit, which is terrible to look down into: There is another, something like this in *Southern-Ronalha*. In these Caves, Doves and Sea Fowls in great numbers use to Nestle.

Several  
strange  
Fishes  
sometimes  
seen here;  
and little  
Whales  
&c.

Several strange Fishes are here taken, or cast ashore sometimes, which are, they say, very beautiful to look upon, but we never had occasion to see any of them. There are likewise a great number of little Whales, which swim through these Isles, which they call spout-Whales or Pellacks, some of which I have seen; and they tell us it is dangerous for Boats to fall in among them, lest they be overturned by them: The former Year Anno. 1699. There were 13 of these Whales driven ashore upon *Gairsay's Land*, and 11 upon *Eglesha's*, about one time, as the Gentlemen themselves did inform me, of which Oyl is made, very beneficial to the Masters of the Ground. The Otters also, Seals or Selchs, and other such Sea-Creatures are very numerous, but now their number is so much diminished, that not one of Twenty is to be seen, and they have found several of them lying dead upon the Shore; some hence observing that the Judgements of GOD as to scarcity of suitable Provisions to these Creatures, are upon the Waters also.

The Tides  
Rapid,

The Tides here are so rapid that they will carry a Ship alongs with them, tho the Wind be contrary, if not very strong, and in going among these Isles, scarce are they out of one Tide, when they are engaged in another; and in going from place to place they will find sometimes the same Flood for them, and at other times against them, and so with the Ebb. Especially there are some impetuous Tides which they call *Rousts*, caused by the strong current of a Tide meeting with a narrow passage; the quickness and rapidity, of the Tide, compensing the narrow.

rowness of the pass g, as it is in Lanes, which fraitens the blowing Wind, and makes the Wind, to blow so much the harder, in a proportion to the pressure it suffers by the fraits of the Lane; So may we reason concerning the Roufts which run among the Isles. I have seen some of these Roufts boyl like unto a seething Pot, with their high, white, and broken Waves and that in a calm Summer Day, when there was no Wind blowing. At one time Sailing by the side of *Laska Rouft* between *Sanda* and the *Caif of Eda*, the Rouft getting some hold of us, turned about the head of our Boat very quickly, and tho there were 4 able young Men Rowing, beside the help we had by the Sail, we could not without great difficulty make our way through it: They tell us, that if the greatest Ship in *Britan* fell into this Rouft, where it is strongest, it would turn her about at its pleasure, and detain her till the Tide fell weak, even tho she had a right favourable Gale. These Roufts are more dangerous in an Ebb then in a Flood, the Ebb being observed still, *ceteris paribus*, to make the foulest and most Tempestuous Sea, and especially they'llc Foam and Rage, if the Tide be running in the Winds eye: And when there is any storm, they will cause any Ship or Boat to stand on end and be ready to sink her in the fall. Several of which Roufts we had occasion to meet with, but the Lord brought us safe through.

Tho the General Current of the Tide be still the same, from West to East in a Flood, and from East to West in an Ebb, yet running with violence upon the Land, they cause a contrary motion in the Sea next to it, which they call *Easter* or *Wester Birth*, according to its Course. And there are some things which have been observed as very strange in the running of the Tides, as that it flows two hours sooner on the West side of *Sanda* then it doth on the East: And at *Hammoness* in the same Ile, both Ebb and Flood runns one way except at the beginning of a quick stream, when for 2 or 3 houres the Flood runs South; in *North Faira* the Sea

Some  
strange Re-  
marks a-  
bout the  
Tides.



Ebbs 9 hours, and Flows but 3. But the reasons of these Phenomena will not be so intricate or hard to resolve, if we consider the situation of these Isles, where the Tide seems to alter his Course, for the Flood coming from the West, to the West side of *Sanaa*, it takes some time before it can get about the points of the Isle to the South side thereof, so in *North Faira*, the Sea is more open whence the Flood cometh, but the Ebb runneth through several Isles, turning many points of Land before it come to *North Faira*, which cannot but retard its motion: So at *Hammoness* in *Sanda*, the Situation of the place much determineth the running of the Tide.

The rapid motion of these Tides makes sailing dangerous.

The rapid motion of these Tides among the Isles, and their meeting with one another makes it very dangerous, and sometimes more especially in a Calm, so a Minister there told us, that he was never nearer death in his Life, then in a dead Calm, when nigh to *Westra*, for they saw the Sea coming, which they thought should swallow them up, and there being no Wind they could not get out of the way, but God so ordered it in his wise Providence, that the Sea or swell of the Sea which they feared, broke on the fore-part of the Boat, and so they escaped.

*Finmen* frequently seen here.

There are frequently *Fin-men* seen here upon the Coasts, as one about a year ago on *Stronsa*, and another within these few Months on *Westra*, a Gentleman with many others in the Isle looking on him nigh to the shore, but when any endeavour to apprehend them, they flee away most swiftly; Which is very strange, that one Man sitting in his little Boat, should come some hundred of Leagues, from their own Coasts, as they reckon *Finland* to be from *Orkney*; It may be thought wonderfull how they live all that time, and are able to keep the Sea so long. His Boat is made of Seal-skins, or some kind of Leather, he also hath a Coat of Leather upon him, and he sitteth in the middle of his Boat, with a little Oar in his hand,

hand, **Fishing** with his Lines: And when in a storm he seeth the high surge of a wave approaching, he hath a way of sinking his Boat, till the wave pass over, least thereby he should be overturned. The Fishers here observe that these *Finnmen* or *Finland-Men*, by their coming drive away the Fishes from the Coasts. One of their Boats is kept as a Rarity in the *Physicians Hall* at *Edinburgh*.

On the West side of *Papa Westra*, between it and *Westra*, there is an *Holm*, wherein once there was a little Chappel, whereof some of the side-walls are only now standing, in which they say, there were seven Sisters buried, who were Nuns, and desired to ly in this *Holm*, about whose Graves this Chappel was built: About a Year ago, there were seen several times at mid-day, about 20. Men walking on that *Holm*, among whom there was one higher and greater then the rest, who sometimes stood and looked unto the Chappel, this my Informer with a hundred People in the Isle of *Papa* saw, who could attest the same: After which appearance there was a Boat cast away on that *Holm* with 4 Men in her, who were all lost.

Some men appearing on a *Holm* before a boat was cast away.

In the Links of *Tranaby* in *Westra*, and of *Skeal* in the *Mainland*, washen from the West by the *Deucalionian Ocean*, some places are discovered when the Sea washeth away the sand, which shews that such places have been Cemeteries or burying places for their dead of old, of a square figure, and the stones are joined together by some cement, when opened Earth and sometimes Bones are found in them, The reason some do give of this is because the way of interring dead bodies among many of the Ancients, (as among the Saxons in the Isle of Britain) was not in deep Graves, but under Clods or Turfs of Earth made into Hillocks. But none of these we had occasion to see. Concerning that Rock called *Leß*, surrounded with the Sea, nigh to the *Noup-head* in *Westra*, upon which some say, if any Man go having Iron on him, the Sea will instantly

Old burying places.

Mr. Wallace's description of Orkney.



rage, so that no Boat can come nigh to take him off, nor the sea be settled till the piece of Iron be cast into it; when in *Wesra* we enquired about it, but found no ground for the truth thereof.

A remarkable providence.

Mr. *W. L. acc* narrates a remarkable Providence, which the Ministers here confirmed to us, as a truth; Concerning four Men in *Stronsa* who used to fish together in one Boat, among whom there was one *John Smith* whose Wife being desirous he should intermit his Fishing for a time, he having purchas'd a great plenty of Fish, which he not being so willing to do, on a day she rising before him stopped the windows and other places in the House, whereby light was let in, and so went to the fields; the other three Men after their usual manner went to Sea, whose Boat she saw overturned and themselves perish; upon which she returned home to her Husband: and no doubt would have given the sad News of his Neighbours perishing, not without Joy congratulating, that he was not this day in company with them: But upon her coming into her house she had yet a more melancholick sight; her Husband lying dead, choaked in that vessel, wherein they used to make Urine.

Instance of God's mercy.

An honest Man in *Orkney* told me, that some years ago, when he was coming home with Timber and some other things in his Boat, from *Inverness* and was almost the length of the Isle of *Eda*, where he lived, the Boat turned and lay upon her side, but the Sails being spread in the water hindred the Mast to go down, and her altogether to overturn, much of what they had in went to the Sea, and he with the other Seamen in Company sat upon the side of the Boat, and so were for some hours tossed up and down, whither the Tide did drive them, they in the mean time comforting and refreshing one another with places of Scripture and notes of Sermons, which lately they had heard, and sometimes putting up earnest Prayers to God whom the Wind and Seas do obey; At length God not turning away

away his Mercy from them, nor their Prayer from Him, graciously gave ear unto their cry, and brought them all safe ashore together with the Boat on the west side of *Sanda*. much of the Timber and what they had in being driven ashore to that same very place before them. A great Mercy when not only they, but their Boat, and most of their Loadening, were saved. Some of these Men whom I am acquainted with, and do judge Godly, cannot speak of this deliverance but with great concernedness and affection, which makes me to think this Mercy not to have been a cast of common Providence, but a gracious Return of their Prayer.

The Effects of Thunder in this Country are very surprising; 1670, The Steeple of *Kirkwall* was brunt with Lightening: And *An.* 1680. there was a Gentleman in *Stromness* in the west end of the *Mainland* had a stall, wherein there were 12. Kine, the Thunder killed every other one, killing one and passing another, so that there were 6. killed, and 6. alive; This the Ministers confirmed as a certain truth to their knowledge.

The effects of thunder strange

There was a Man that died not many years ago, who when a Child being left in the Field, (the Mother, as some say, shearing at a little distance from him) was taken up by an Eagle, and carried from the Parish of *Ophir* in the *Mainland*, to the Isle of *Waes* over 3 or 4 Miles of Sea, but in God's good Providence, the Eagle being quickly pursued to his Nest whither the Child was taken, he was recovered without any hurt.

An Eagle takerh up a Child.

It was observed that in these Isles before the late dearth, there were several strange Birds seen, such as they have not seen formerly nor since. One of the Ministers told me, that one Bird frequented his House about that time for a quarter of an Year, which was of a black, white, red and green Colour: As also he

Several strange birds seen.

saw



saw another, all stripped or sprained on the back, which Birds were beautiful to behold.

A monster born. There was a Monster about 7 Years ago born of one Helen Thomson Spouse to David Martin Weaver in North Ronaldsha, having its Neck between Head and Shoulders a quarter and an half of an yard long, with a Face, Nose, Eyes, Mouth &c. to the Back, as well as before, so that it was two Faced, which Monster, came living into the World: This the Minister declared unto us, having taken the Attestation of the Women present at the Birth, he not being on the place at the time: And it is said that a certain Woman should have wished this unto the Mother, whom she alledged had lied upon her, in her wrath wishing, that if she spoke a lie she might bring forth a Monster, which accordingly came to pass in God's Holy and Wise Providence.

Concerning mines, shells &c.

Buchan. Hist. L. r.

Some say there are several Mines of Silver, Tin, Lead &c. Also some Veins of Marble and Alabaster; Buchanan commends this Country for white and black Lead, of which there is to be had as good as in Britain. *Sæc diversis in locis hujus Insula, Metalla sunt plumbi albi & nigri tam probi quam æquam in Britannia reperiatur.* As also several kinds of fine Shells to be found on the shore and Rocks, but we had occasion to see none of them, save some of these Nuts, whereof they make Snuff-Boxes.

## CHAP. V.

Some Heathenish and Popish Rites, Charms &c. yet remaining in the Orkney-Isles, are glanced at.

Concerning their superstitious rites,

BEfore that I bring to a close my Discourse concerning Orkney, I shall give an Account of some Customs yet prevailing among them, which can be constructed

structed to be nothing else, save the four dregs of Pagan and Popish Superstition and Idolatry, yea and many of them such as the Charms practised by them to be the ineer and woful effects of pure Devilry, and not the product of Natures Operation.

But least I should be mistaken I judge it not amiss to premise, That not all nay nor the generality of Orkney are hereby impeached, as guilty of these evils, for I know there are many judicious and wise Men, and I hope some real Christians among them, who abhor and detest such things as much as any, but hereby some foolish and silly ones are intended, whom deceiving and being deceived, Satan leadeth Captive at his will; Nor yet that all the Isles are alike lying under the Charge, for there are some of them, whose Inhabitants are generally more Moral and Discreet: Neither is it alledged, that such sinful and corrupt Customs prevail as much now as formerly, for they are much away by what they were, and that even of late: Nor is it denied but that honest and faithful Ministers will labour to have them abolished every where, seeing alas! There is much horrid wickedness and manifest Devilry too, with us in the South, as well as with them in the North, so that no part of the Kingdom can plead, *not guilty.*

A caution given.

But my principal Scope and Design, is to manifest the Works of Darknes, and to shew how busy the God of this World is in deluding and blinding poor Souls, and how ready we are to be his drudges and slaves; that so these things being wisely and seriously considered, all may be induced to make a Christian improvement thereof, both with respect to themselves and others, whom they are called to pity and pray for, *If peradventure God will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth, that they may be recovered out of the snare of the Devil;* And more especially that the General Assemblies and other Judicatories of this Church as they are called, may be pleased to continue their Fatherly Care over

My design in this chap.



over these Northern Isles, that tho they be remote from them as to Situation, yet they may be near unto them, as to a warm and kindly affection, which our Church hath not been wanting in hitherto.

Some  
things pro  
per to be  
premiered.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. we would take notice, that the old Maxim *Ignorance is the mother of Devotion*, so much cryed up by the Papists and their judicially blinded Clergy, is so far from being the Mother of Devotion, that it is both the Mother and Nurse of the most damnable Errors, Superstitions and Delusions, as these Isles know to their sad Experience; for Ignorance of the Principles of our Holy Religion, doth greatly prevail among the Commonalty, so that as one of their Ministers not without some concern and greif for the same, told me, Not one of a hundred in some of their Parishes can read. How this comes to pass, that the People should be so grossly Ignorant I shall not undertake to determine, it is commonly imputed to their want of Schools, through the Country, which indeed I will not say, but is one great cause thereof, and therefore that this so very dreadful an evil may be effectually remedied, care should be taken by all concerned, that Schools be Erected in every Parish, and a competent Salary provided for the Masters Maintenance and Encouragement; and that also in every Isle where there is any number of Inhabitants, some Person should be appointed for the Instruction and Education of their Children; and until that such a course be taken, the People generally will be Ignorant still, and the Ministers as to the Preaching part, may complain in the words of the Prophet, *Whom shall we teach knowledge? and whom shall we make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.* For it is much about one to Preach to Auditors besotted with Stupidity and Ignorance, as it is to give Exhortation unto Babes, Therefore it is that our Church in her Assemblies hath so frequently and seriously pressed the Learning of Children to Read, and the providing  
of

of Schools for that end, Pastours to be diligent in that initiating and necessary Work of Examination and Preaching Catechetick Doctrine, and the Concurrence of Parents with both in laying out themselves for the Instruction of their Children, as well by themselves as by others; Godly Ministers well knowing that the Success of Ordinances and Edification of their People, dependeth much thereupon, as the means which the Lord useth to bless for the bringing in of his Elect; Knowledge being so necessary to the Being of Faith, that the latter is sometimes expressed by the Name of the former.

1/a. 53. 11.  
Jo. 17. 3.  
Ec.

And seeing they retain not God in their knowledge, it is no wonder they be given over to a Reprobate Mind, to do things which are not convenient; No wonder they frequent their old Chappels for Superstitious Ends, of which the corrupt and purblind Reason of Man hath been always very fond: No wonder that being in the dark without the Lantern of the knowledge of Scripture-Revelation, they mistake their way, and by the using of Charms and consulting of Charmers, they run to *Beelzebub* in stead of having recourse to the God of Israel. Which Ignorance to be the cause of these Evils, will appear the more evidently, if we consider, that in these Isles, where there is a greater measure of the knowledge of God, there is not such a following of these horrid and hellish Practices.

God's  
judgment  
upon the  
ignorant

There are several old Chappels in these Isles, which the People resort unto, but that which I heard of, as most famous is *St. Tredwels Chappel* in *Papa-Westra*, which they have such a Veneration for, that they will come from other Isles in considerable numbers to it, some of us having occasion to be on that Isle, we saw this Chappel, situated on a small low Rock, within a Loch commonly called *St. Tredwels Loch*, to which we passed by stepping-stones, before this Chappel door there was a heap of small stones, into which the Superstitious People when they come do cast a small stone or two

Several old  
chappels  
through  
the Isles.

St. Tred-  
wels chap-  
pel.



for their offering, and some will cast in Money; the Chappel hath been but little, and is now Ruinous, only some of the Walls are standing, which the People are so far from suffering to be demolished, that they labour to keep them up, and tho the Proprietour of the ground hath some way enclosed it, yet this proves not effectual to prevent the frequenting thereof. At the North East side of the Loch nigh to the Chappel there is a high stone standing, behind which there is another stone lying hollowed in the form of a Manger, and nigh to this there is another high stone standing with a round hole through it, for what use these stones served, we could not learn; whether for binding the Horses of such to them as came to the Chappel, and giving them meat in the hollow stones, or for tying the Sacrifices to, as some say, in times of Pagan Idolatry; is uncertain.

St. Tredwels

Loch held  
Medi-  
cinal.

This *St Tredwel's Loch* nigh to the East end of which this Chappel is, is held by the People as Medicinal, whereupon many diseased and infirm Persons resort to it, some saying that thereby they have got good; As a certain Gentleman's Sister upon the Isle, who was not able to go to this Loch without help, yet returned without it, as likewise a Gentleman in the Countrey who was much distressed, with sore Eyes, went to this Loch and Washing there became sound and whole, tho he had been at much pains and expence to cure them formerly. With both which Persons, he who was Minister of the place for many Years, was well acquainted, and told us that he saw them both before and after the Cure: The present Minister of *Wefra* told me, that such as are able to walk, use to go so many times about the Loch, as they think will perfect the Cure, before they make any use of the Water, and that without speaking to any, for they beleave, that if they speak, this will marr the Cure: Also he told that on a certain Morning not long since, he went to this Loch, and found six so making their circuit, whom with some

difficulty

difficulty he obliging to speak, said to him, they came there for their Cure.

How it cometh to pass, that this Loch should accomplish the cure of any. I leave to my Reader to judge, whether it be by any Medicinal or healing Vertue in the Water, which I incline not to think, the Cure being so circumstantiated; or if the force and strength of the imagination of the Persons afflicted, may have any tendency that way; which, some judge, hath its own influence, in some such like cases: Or, rather, by the Aid and assistance of Satan, whom God in his Holy and wise Providence may permit so to do for the further judicial blinding and hardning of these who follow such unwarrantable and unlawful courses: God so punishing them, by giving them up to such strong delusions. Yet I hear, that when they have done all, that is usual for them to do; as going about the Loch, washing their Bodies or any part thereof, leaving something at the Loch, as old Clouts and the like &c. It is but in few, in whom the effect of healing is produced. As for this Loch's appearing like Blood, before any distasture befall the Royal Family, as some do report, we could find no ground, to beleive any such thing.

How the water of this Loch should accomplish the cure of any examined.

These Chappels the People frequent, as for other ends, so for Prayer, they placing a kind of Merit therein. when performed in such places, and this they observe more than private Retirements; And if they be under any Sickness, or in any danger, as at Sea, they will vow so to do. And when they go to the Chappels to pay the Vows taken on, they use to lay several Stones, one above another, according to the number of Vows which they made; some of which heaps we saw in *St. Tredwells Chappel*. And none must go empty handed, but leave behind them something, either a peice of Money, or of Bread, or a Stone, which they judge will be sufficient.

These Chapels frequented also for Prayer, and paying of Vowes.

As at all times, when occasion offers, they observe these Superstitious Practices, so especially during Lent, they

Especially in the time of Lent,



they will not neglect their Devotions in such places; and on *Easter-Sunday* several Boats will be seen going to them from other Isles. And tho' their Ministers both privately and publickly have spoken to them, yet they cannot get them to forbear and abandon these Customs. And the Minister of *South-Rona* told us, that many of the People in that Isle, especially such as live at the south end thereof nigh to the Kirk, called our *Ladys Kirk*, whereof, tho now the Walls only be standing without a Roof, yet the very Stones thereof they reverence, and are not far from adoring; And so tenacious are they, that when in rough weather, he hath procured the conveniency of a Barn to Preach in, yet the People obliged him to come to this ruinous Fabrick else many of them would not have heard: They are now about the putting of a Roof on this Church, which the Gentlemen of the Isle are not inclined to, judging other places more commodious for it to be built in, but Proposals of this nature do not relish with the People, they being so superstitiously wedded to the place of its present Situation: Whereupon the Heads of Families will rather by themselves contribute to the repairing of this Old Church than suffer a new one to be built in any other place of the Isle, tho less to their cost.

Concern-  
ing a Stone  
lying in  
Our Ladys  
Church.

In this old Fabrick of our *Ladys Church*, there is a Stone lying about 4 foot long, and 2 foot broad, but narrower and round at the two ends, upon the surface of which Stone, there is the print of two feet, concerning which the Superstitious People have a Tradition, that *St. Magnus*, when he could not get a Boat on a time to carry him over *Pighsland Firth*, took this stone, and setting his Feet thereupon, passed the Firth safely, and left the Stone in this Church, which hath continued here ever since. But as I think, and some more judicious People do likewise suggest, it hath been a Stone, upon which under Popery, the Delinquents stood bare footed suffering Penance. It is like when thus *St. Magnus* came over the Firth, it hath been  
at

at that time, when he was seen riding through *Aberdeen*, giving the first account of the defeat of the *Englishs* at *Bannockburn* and afterward was seen going over *Pightland Firth*. And indeed both are alike destitute of any shadow of Truth, credible only by these superstitious and silly ones, whom the GOD of this World hath blinded.

Several of the Isles have their Saints Days, which some do superstitiously observe. There is one day in Harvest, on which, the more ignorant, especially in *Roula*, say, if any work the Ridges will blood. The Lark some call our *Ladys Hen*. And some such Popish Dregs are to be found: The Lord preserve this Land from Poperys Inundation; for as it is credible from what hath been said, and some better acquainted with this Country did inform us, That if Popery get footing again, (from the fears of which in the good Providence of GOD, we were lately delivered,) many of the Inhabitants of these Isles, would readily embrace it, and by retaining some of these old Popish Rites and Customs, seem to be in a manner prepared for it.

Several of the Isles have their Saints Dayes.

Next to glance at their Charms, which I shall briefly do, and not give any Account, how they perform them, lest thereby I should seem to point out to any, how to try the experiment of this Hellish Art and tremendous Devilry, which I think I do sufficiently guard against, not only by barely reciting there are such, but also by proper Precautions adduced in this Chapter.

Concerning their Charms.

They have a Charm, whereby they stop excessive bleeding in any, whatever way they come by it, whether by or without External Violence. The name of the Patient being sent to the Charmer, he saith over some words, (which I heard) upon which the Blood instantly stoppeth, tho the bleeding Patient were at the greatest distance from the Charmer. Yea upon the saying of these words, the Blood will stop in the bleeding Throats of Oxen or Sheep, to the astonishment of Spectators. Which account we had from the Ministers of the Country.

A Charm to stop excessive bleeding.

There



Another  
for the  
Toothach.

There is a Charm likewise they make use of for the Toothach, whereof I had the following instance from an Honest Man worthy of Credit. Some years ago, there was one who used this Charm, for the abating the pain of one living in *Eda*, tormented therewith, and tho the Action then was at a distance, the Charmer not being present with the Patient, yet according to the most exact calculation of the time, when the Charm was performed by the Charmer, there fell a living Worm out of the Patients Mouth, when he was at Supper. This my Informer knew to be a Truth, and the Man from whose Mouth it fell is yet alive in the Isle of *Sanda*. Whether this Worm was generated in the corrupted part, and so fell out by the Devils means, at the using of the Charm; or the Worm was brought by an evil Spirit *aliunde*, to the mouth, and thence falling down, I shall not determine.

Thei  
Beasts  
and Boats  
sprinkled  
with fore-  
spoken  
Water.

Also when the Beasts as Oxen, Sheep, Horses, &c. are Sick, they sprinkle them with a Water made up by them, which they call *Fore-spoken Water*; wherewith likeways they sprinkle their Boats, when they succeed and prosper not in their Fishing. And especially on *Hallow-Even*, they use to sein or sign their Boats and put a Cross of Tar upon them, which my Informer hath often seen. Their Houses also some use then to sein.

A Charm  
for any  
under a  
decay.

They have a Charm also whereby they try if persons be in a decay or not, and if they will die thereof; which they call Casting of the Heart. Of this the Minister of *Stronza* and *Eda* told us, he had a very remarkable Passage, in a Process, yet standing in his Session Records.

Several  
other  
Charms.

Several other Charms also they have, about their Marriage, when Women in Travel, when their Cow is calving, when Churning their Milk, or when Brewing, Or when their Children are sick, by taking them to a Smith (without premonishing him) who hath had a Smith to his Father, and a Smith to his Grand-Father. And of several such like Charms, we had an account from

from the Ministers, as likeways, how these Charms were performed; but of these enough.

Although these Charms sometimes, yet not always do they produce the desired Effects: As in the instance of staying of Blood, one of the Charmers Wives fell once a Bleeding, which he by all his Art was not able to stop; Whereupon he is said thus to have expressed himself, "I have stopped the Bleeding of 100, and yet I cannot do it to my Wife." These Charms not always effectual.

That such admirable Effects upon the using of the Charms are produced by the Agency of Demons, I think few, if any, will doubt, God so permitting it to be in his Holy and Wise Providence, for the further punishment and judicial blinding of those, who follow such unlawful courses, and the Devil thereby engaging his Slaves more in his Service: Yet not always the effects desired and expected do follow, that all may know the Devil is a chained one, and can do nothing without the permission of a Sovereign God, who is Lord over all. Our Assemblies sensible of the great Sin and Evil that is in using these Charms, and consulting of Charmers, have made several Acts both against the one and the other, strictly inhibiting and discharging all such Hellish Practices, and requiring all Ministers diligently to see to the observance and Execution thereof. Acts of Assemblies are standing against such. As by the Assembly. 1640.

Evil Spirits also called Fairies are frequently seen in several of the Isles dancing and making merry, and sometimes seen in Armour; Also I had the account of the wild Sentiments of some of the People concerning them; but with such I shall not detain my Reader, We hastning our Voyage to Zetland. Fairies frequently seen.

CHAP,



## CHAP. VI.

## A

## Description of Zetland.

The Country in General *Described*; The  
Soil, *Product*, *Manners* of the People &c.  
hinted at.

Situation  
of Zet-  
land.

**Z**ETLAND lyes to the N. East from Orkney, be-  
twixt the 60. and 61 Degree of Latitude, there  
being about 20. or 21. Leagues betwixt the *Start-  
Head* of Sanda, the Northernmost point thereof, and *Swim-  
burgh-Head* the Southernmost point of Land in Zetland,  
over a very rolling and swelling Sea, wherein there  
constantly runs the strong Current of a Tide, which  
causing the Sea to rise with its swelling waves, the  
whole passage betwixt Orkney and Zetland, is but as  
one continued Roust, or strong and impetuous Tide,  
especially about the *Fair Isle*, still such a great Sea goeth,  
even in the greatest Calm, that the Boats are like to  
sling the masts out of them; and our Boat-master  
told us, that frequently when he had been passing the  
*Fair Isle* in a dead Calm, the Boat hath been so tossed  
by the swelling Sea, that it would have taken in wa-  
ter on every side. And I have heard Mariners often  
declare, that there is more hazard in these Seas, then  
in going to the *Eastern* or *Western Indies*. The *Fair  
Isle* (of which more afterward) is reckoned to be  
but 8. Leagues from Zetland, whereas it is about  
12. or 13. Leagues from Orkney, so that we shall  
consider it, together with the Isles belonging to Zet-  
land.

The Isles

Zetland consisteth of more Isles than Orkney,  
whereof some are more, others less considerable, beside  
many

many Holms serving for Pasturage. The largest of them is that which they call the *Mainland*, 60. Miles Mainland. long from South or South and by West, to North or North and by East; as to breadth not all alike, for tho in some places it be 16. miles, yet in other it is scarce one Mile broad, it being so interlected with Voes, Sounds or Lochs, that it may be said to consist of a great number of Promontories or Branches of Land stretching themselves into the Sea.

All this Country consisting of so many Isles, goeth under one common Name, called by some *Hethland*, Original by others *Zetland*, and also *Schetland*. of the The Etymology of which Names is very uncertain, as was that name Zet- of *Orkney*; some assigning one Reason of the Name, land. and others another at their pleasure. That which seemeth most probable is, that this Country is called *Hethland*, because it is very Mountainous and riseth high above the waters, so a high land in Norse is called *Hoghlund*: It is called *Zeland* or *Zetland*, because of the great Sea wherewith on all hands it is encompassed, *Zee* being *Sea* in that Language. And called *Schetland*, The Forti- because of a kind of Custom or Tribute called *Scat*, fication which they payed to their Norwegian Masters, when Schatt or they were in Possession of this Country, and the Tri- Scat in bute or Custom imposed upon the Inhabitants of *Nor-* Denmark levyed an. *way* to this day is called *Scat*, and tho *Zetland* be now 1691. is a annexed to the Crown of *Scotland*, yet there is a cer- Tax with a tain Rent or due, which the Gentlemen and some witnels or others here do pay Yearly to the King or his Stew- very great, ard, which is still called *Scat*. I say altho we cannot saith the be positive in determining the reasons of the Name, yet modern it seems to be of a *Norwegian* or *Danish* Original. account of Denmark.

Seeing I have already had under consideration, by whom *Orkney* was first Planted and Inhabited, and how it hath been disposed of hitherto, I judge it not very needful for me to add any more to that purpose concerning *Zetland*, for it is more then probable, that about the same time, by the same Persons, hath *Zet-*



land also been Inhabited, seing there are many mo Picts Houses remaining there, and some of them as to outward appearance in better case, then are to be found in *Orkney*, and always our Historians in their Descriptions of these Northern Isles of *Orkney* and *Zetland* have reckoned them as under the Government of the same Masters; Therefore without further premising Preliminaries of this nature, I come to consider the present state of the Country.

The Country  
mossey  
and but  
thinly In-  
habited.

Altho the Country be large, yet it is in many places but thinly Inhabited, and that for the most part upon the Coasts, and indeed otherwise it cannot well be, for there are few if any places in *Zetland*, but they are within two Miles of the Sea, which they incline to dwell nigh unto, being more convenient for their Fishing, and for the gooding of their Land, which is ordinarily by Sea-ware, hence, it would be incommodious for them upon these accounts to be at any distance from it. Besides, the Country is generally Mossey and Mountainous, all covered over with Heath, yea the far greatest part thereof is as one great Moss or Quagmire made up of Water and Earth blended together, which kind of ground would require much Labour and Expence to bring in either to be Grazing, or Corn-Land, if at all in many places they could get it done, for from *Scalloway* on the West side of the *Mainland* to *Lerwick* on the East side thereof, four Miles over land, it is but a continued tract of Moss and Moor, so that there is not one House all that way, till we come near unto *Lerwick*, whereas we would think that this peice of ground should be better Inhabited then many others, considering the great resort of Strangers in the Summer time thereunto, if Nature had not laid such inconveniences in the way, which would prove so difficult to overcome.

The people  
discreet  
and fash-  
ionable.

The People are generally Discreet and Civil, not so Rustick and Clounish as would be expected in such a place of the World, which may be much owing to their

their Converse and Commerce with Strangers, who repair to these Isles in the Summer Season, with whom the Inhabitants do keep a constant Bartering or Trade; which Trading as it makes them the better to live, so it may tend not a little to the Cultivating of their Manners. They are also very Fashionable in their Clothes, and the Gentry want not their fine Stuffs, such as *Holland, Hamburg &c.* do afford, so that they are to be seen in as good an Order and Dress, as with us in the South: The Bowrs, Fishers and other Country People also do go honest-like and decent in their Apparel, as becometh their station.

They also have always been in repute for *Hospitality*,<sup>Hospi-  
table.</sup> and indeed we have seen no other to contradict that which is spoken, so much to their Commendation and Praise. for at any time, when we had occasion to visite Gentlemen, Merchants or others, we were always by them kindly Entertained. And so much they are said to be given to this commendable peice of Humanity, that if they do purchase any thing from Foreign Merchants, which they put any value upon, such as Wheat-Bread, some strong Liquor &c. Even the Country People will not use it themselves, but reserve it for the Entertainment of Strangers; As for those old Inhabitants of the *Danish* Blood, of whom it was said, *That they were seeming Fair, but really False, and superlatively Proud,* they are much worn out of this Country; and if at any time Ships be driven ashore upon their Coasts, the Inhabitants use very kindly and Humanely to treat the distressed Company, of which Humane Treatment a Ship belonging to the Firth had a late experience, being broke on the Coast there in *December* last, as some of the Ships Company informed me. Such a kind and generous Reception, Merchants and Mariners meet not with in many places, upon which they are unhappily cast, from whom better things would be expected. In the matters of God and Religion, the Body of the People are said to be very Ignorant, by these who

The body  
of the peo-  
ple igno-  
rant.



know them better then we can be supposed to have had access to do, considering the short time of our stay and abode among them; Which may be imputed to their want of convenient Schools for the Instruction of their Youth in many places of the Country; Which also was assigned as the reason why Ignorance doth so much prevail in the *Orkney Isles*. Which great Evil, the Mother and Leader of many others, all should labour to redress as they are severally called and concerned, Authority also interpoling their Command, and not denying their Countenance and Encouragement thereunto.

Yet frequent Gospel ordinances.

Yet we must say, that the People do frequent the dispensing of Gospel-Ordinances, and seem to hear with some measure of Attention and Reverence; and as appeared to us, not without some seriousness, and concern upon their Spirits, which after hearing continued with some, as we found by our Converse with them, which encouraged us to set and keep up two Week-days Sermons at *Lerwick*, during our stay in the bounds, which the People thronged unto, thereby shewing great respect to the Ordinances dispensed by us: So that matters looked far otherwise, then what was expected by our selves and many others before we came to this Country. And indeed after conference upon this head, all of us judged, that if things were got put into a better order, and some evils removed, which I forbear to mention, knowing that they will come under the cognizance and consideration of others, who are in a capacity to redress them, there might be a Harvest through Grace.

No latine school there.

Altho there be a Latine School at *Kirkwall* in *Orkney*, yet there is none in all this Country, which cannot but be very prejudicial to the Inhabitants, the Advancement of the Education of their Youth being the by hindered, many promising and pregnant Ingenys lost, and Letters discouraged; For Gentlemen are either obliged to keep their Children at home, and so they must

must want that peice of Learning, which tends so much to Form and Polish their Mindes, and to compleat them as Gentlemen. or else send them to other Countries, where Education is to be had, which many are averse to do, not only because of the Charge and Expence they will be at, but also of the fear they will be in, in sending their Children over Sea, and keeping them so long at such a distance from them. As for Chaplains, tho they could be had, which would be with difficulty in this corner, yet all Gentlemen who have Children to Educate, cannot well bear the Charges of bringing them over from Scotland and keeping them with them for so long a time. Whereupon the Ministers there are very desirous, that the Government may be Addressed for Encouragment to School-Masters through the Country, and particularly that a Latine School be set up either at *Lerwick* or *Scalloway*.

*English* is the Common Language among them yet many of the People speak *Norse* or corrupt *Danish*, especially such as live in the more Northern Isles, yea so ordinary it is in some places, that it is the first Language their Children speak. Several here also speak good *Dutch*, even Servants though they never have been out of the Country, because of the many *Dutch Ships* which do frequent their Ports. And there are some who have something of all these three Languages, *English*, *Dutch*, and *Norse*. The *Norse* hath continued ever since the *Norwegians* had these Isles in Possession, and in *Orkney* (as hath been said) it is not quite extinct, tho there be by far more of it in *Zetland*, which many do commonly use.

Their Language.

It is observable that the Names of the Descendants of the old Inhabitants, differ from the Names of others now numerous among them, for these only have a Name without a Sirname, save what is taken from their Fathers Name, and by adding Son or Daughter thereunto, Exemp. *Gra*, *Agnes Magnus Daughter*, her own Name is *Agnes*, her Fathers is *Magnus*, to which Daugh-

Names.



ter is added, which is the whole Denomination or Designation under which such a Woman goes; So *Marrion Peters Daughter, Laurence Johns Son* &c. Which they say is yet the *Danish* way of Expressing and Distinguishing Names. And for further clearing, if there be two Men or Women of the same Name, they use also to design them by the places where they ordinarily reside, as *Agnes Magnus Daughter in Trebister*, that so she may be discriminated from another Woman of the same Name living in another place. It is probable that hence flowed these Surnames, such as *Williamson, Robertson, Jamieson, Davidson* &c. which do abound with us in *Scotland*. In some words also their Pronunciation doth differ from that of ours, as for Instance, they often use to leave out the Letter H in their Pronunciation, as if it did not belong to the Word, so *Three* they pronounce as *Tree*, *Thou* as *Tou* or *Tu*. &c. They have also some *Norish* words which they commonly use, which we understood not, till they were explained, such as *Air* which signifies a Sand Bank, *Oyse* an Inlet of the Sea, *Voe* a Creek or Bay &c. And these words are much used both in *Zetland* and *Orkney*.

The Country better inhabited then formerly.

It would appear that the Country is now much better Inhabited, than formerly some ages agoe it hath been, for we hear but of few who leave this Country, having once fixed their abode therein, tho there be many who have lately come to it from *Orkney, Caithness, Sutherland, Buchan* and other places especially in the North of *Scotland*. So that in all *Lerwick*, the most considerable Town in the Country, there are but very few whose Grand-fathers have lived in those Isles. And in *Lerwick* it self about 30 years agoe there were only 4 Houses, and some years before there were none at all, tho now there are between two and three hundred Families in it.

People healthful and many live to a good age.

Tho the ground be generally bad, and the Climate cold, yet it is not unwholesome living here, as appears from

from the many vigorous old People, that abound in the Isles, whose health I think is rather more firm and sound than with us, neither are they lyable to such frequent sicknels, whither this is to be imputed to the freeness and purity of the Air, or to the quality of their Diet, or the Sobriety of their living, or to all these and the like I shall not judge. Yet they tell us they used to live much longer in former Ages than now they do, as of one *Tairvile*, who lived 180 years, and all his time never drank Beer or Ale; His Son also and Grand-Children lived to a good old Age. who seldom or never drank any other thing save Milk, Water and their Country-Bland. It is said also that this *Tairvils* Father lived longer then himself: There was also one *Laurentius* in the Parish of *Waes*, whose Heir-Oyes do yet live there, who arrived at a great Age, whom *Buchanan* mentioneth, that he lived in his time, marrying a Wife after the 100. year of his Age, and in the 140. went a Fishing with his little Boat when the Sea was Tempestuous. *Salubritatis firmitudo in Laurentio quodam nostra aetate apparuit, qui post Centissimum annum uxorem duxit: centesimum quadragesimum annum agens, savi-* *Buchan.*  
*ssimo mari in sua naviculâ piscatum prodibat: Ac nuper nulla* *Hist. L. 1.*  
*vi gravioris morbi labefactatus, sed senio solutus decessit.*  
 For surely. as all Skilful Physicians do grant, there is nothing more Conducive to the maintaining of a Sound and Healthful Constitution, then a sober and regular Diet, whereas they who live otherwise, to speak with respect to 2d. Causes do impair their Health, and cuts themselves off, often in the midst of their days; especially such as feed high, and indulge themselves in drinking strong Liquors, which tends to the exhausting of that Natural and Innate Heat, the Fountain of our Animal-Life; whereas it is observed of all these, who arrived at such a great Age that they seldom if ever drank any strong Liquor.

There



They ob-  
noxious to  
the scurvy.

There is no Sickneſs or Diſeaſe this Country is more ſubject unto then the *Scurvey*, as is *Orkney* like- wiſe, which is occaſioned doubtleſs by their Salt-meats, Fiſhes upon which many for the moſt part, do live, Sea- Air &c. And ſometimes this *Scurvey* degenerates into a kind of Leproſy, which they call a *Baſtard ſcurvey*, and is diſcerned by hairs falling from the Eye-brees, the Noſe falling in &c. Which when the People come to know, they ſeparate and ſet them apart for fear of Infection, building Huts or little Houſes for them in the feild, I ſaw the Ruines of one of theſe Houſes about half a mile from *Lerwick*, where a Woman was for ſome Years kept for this Reaſon. This Baſtard Leproſy, they judge, is cauſed by the many grey Fiſhes, ſuch as Sillucks, Piltocks, &c. which they eat; for Bread failing many of the People in the Summer time, that often for 4 or 5 Months, they will not taſte thereof, theſe Fiſhes are almoſt their only meat, and eſpecially the Livers of theſe Fiſhes, which are thought to be more unhealthful then the Fiſhes themſelves, and they much incline to eat, do occaſion this. The drinking alſo of hot Bland (which is a kind of a Serum of Milk, of which more afterwards) together with theſe Fiſhes, do beget ſuch corrupt humours to the diſtempering of the Body. Theſe Scorbutick Perſons are more ordinarily in *Dunroſſneſs* and *Delton*, and more rare in other places; And that becauſe they have mo Grey Fiſhes in theſe two Pariſhes, then in others.

When any  
ſickneſs  
breaketh  
up in the  
Country,  
it quickly  
ſpreads.  
ſmall pox  
lately  
there.

And it hath been obſerved often by the Inhabitants, that when in Holy Providence any Sickneſs cometh upon or breaketh up in the Country, it uſeth to go through them like a Plague, ſo that ſince we came off the ſmall Pox hath ſeiſed upon many both old and young, and was ſo univerſal, that upon one Lord's- Day there were 90, Prayed for in the Church of *Lerwick* all ſick of the ſame Diſeaſe, whereas when we were there a few weeks before, there was not one that we knew ſick thereof. They ſay a Gentlemans

Son

Son in the Countrey who had lately gone from the South, and was under it when he came home, brought it with him, which very quickly spread among the People, the old as well as the young; and so sad have been the delolating effects thereof, that one told me who arrived here lately from the place, that he verily judgeth the third part of the People in many of the Isles dead thereof.

Altho many of the Inhabitants have each their particular Trades and Employments wherein more especially they lay out themselves, and are taken up about, yet are they all generally some way acquainted with the Sea, and can with some dexteritie and skill, attained by Experience manage their Boats, not only because of their frequent passing from Isle to Isle, and going over the Voes or Lochs which ly in upon, and cut the Mainland, but by Reason of their great Fishing, not only for their own use, but for the use of Merchants, who buy their Fishes, or give them the Value in foreign Commodities: Hence most of the Inhabitants, not only have some Pasturage for their Cattel, and some Corn Land about their Houses. which they manure, but also their parts of Boats for the end forsaide. Yet there are many who follow no Trade but their Fishing.

Beside their Fish-Trade with foreign Merchants, they do likewise drive a great Trade with Orkney, from which every Year several Boats do pass to Zetland Loaden with Corns, Meal, Malt, &c. upon the coming whereof they often wait for Barley seed, tho the last Year they had a Considerable Crop, so that the Barley Seed was sown before the Boats came over. The Orkney Men also bring sometimes Stockins, Ale, and the like which they know to be vendible here, Hence every Year considerable Sums of Money go from Zetland to Orkney, And some have told me that most of the Money they have in Orkney, is from Zetland. So great is the Advantage that these Isles do reap by their Neighbourly Commerce with one another, for as Zetland could not well live

Their  
Employ-  
ment.

They trade  
with Ork-  
ney.



without *Orkney's* Corns, so neither could *Orkney* be so well without *Zetlands* Money.

Their  
Money  
from for-  
eign Mer-  
chants.

As *Orkney* have much of their Money from *Zetland*, so *Zetland* have all theirs from foreign Nations and Countreys whose Merchants traffick with them, as from *Holland*, *Hamburg*, *Breme* &c. The Dutch Money doth Ordinarily pass among them, as Stivers, half Stivers, and since the Rates of the Money were raised in *Scotland*, many here have been considerable gainers by the Ducket-douns, which is the species of Money that the *Hollanders* bring more ordinarily with them.

The Kings  
Rents.

The  
Bishop  
had no  
Rents  
from this  
Country.

The Kings Rents are but the  $\frac{3}{4}$  part of what they are in *Orkney*, For tho this Countrey be by far greater and more spacious then *Orkney*, yet it is not so well inhabited, neither is the ground so good: These Rents are payed to the Taxmen in Butter, Oyl, and Money, The Oyl is made of the livers of Fishes, and is sent South for the making of Soap, or is otherwise disposed of, as may be most Advantageous. The Bishops had no Rents from this Countrey; And tho it belong to the Diocess of *Orkney*, and is a considerable part of that Charge, yet we did not hear that ever any of these sole Pastours of their Diocesses, as some are pleased to call them, visited these bounds.

Little  
Cornland  
here.

There being so little Corn-Land here, is the cause, why none of the Revenues of the Croun are payed in Meal or Corns, whereas in *Orkney* it is far otherwise, as hath been said; for any Corn-Land they have is ordinarily but a few Ridges nigh to the Coasts, for at any distance from the Sea, and in many places also nigh unto it, there is nothing but a Mossy and Mountainous Desert covered with Heather, and only some places plentiful with a few Kine, Sheep, or Shelties, tho in other places ye will go some Miles and see none. This Moss and Moor which so much aboundeth, renders Travelling very dangerous, even to the Natives themselves, and so deep is it in many places and that in the Summer and drouthy season, that Horses cannot

not pass it, and Men on foot not without difficulty and hazard: As in the Isle of *Tell* the Minister in going to the Church, from his House is obliged to go on foot 8. Miles almost, wading up to the knees. And indeed the easiest and safest way of Travelling is by Sea in Boats about the skirts of the Isles, which also is not without danger.

And tho the greatest part of this Countrey be thus <sup>some</sup> Mossy and Moorish, yet there are some pleasant Spots <sup>pleasant</sup> in it well furnished with Grass and Corn, as nigh to <sup>Spots</sup> *Scalloway*, *Ufness* &c. in the *Mainland*, some places in <sup>through</sup> the Parishes of *Dunrosness* also on the *Main*, in the Isle <sup>the Coun-</sup> of *Unst* &c. Hence some Years they will have 20. Fold of Increase, but this is more rare, for at other times in several places they will scarce have the double of their seed. They make much use of Barly-Bread, which appears to be fairer then their Oat-Bread, for their Barly they take to be the best Grain, it agreeing better with the ground then Oats. And as it is in *Orkney*, so is it here, if any white Corn be brought unto the Countrey for feed, it will soon degenerate and become like their own.

I think the Kine and Sheep are of a greater Size, <sup>Concern-</sup> then they are in *Orkney*, tho their Horses be of a less; <sup>ing their</sup> as for the Sheep I take them to be little less then they <sup>cattel and</sup> are in many places of *Scotland*, they Lamb not so soon <sup>harvest.</sup> as with us, for at the end of *May*, their Lambs are not come in Season, their Harvest also is much latter, for they Judge it very early if they get their Corns in against the Middle of October, They observe that our Seasons will be two months before theirs, but I do not think they differ so much:

If their Sheep were well kept, it would be very <sup>Their</sup> pleasant to behold them in Flocks, they being of di- <sup>sheep:</sup> vers colours; some of a pyed, others of a broun, others of a broun and white, others of a black colour, some also have black sprains on their backs, others on their foreheads; and some say they have as great a number of black



black Sheep, as they have of white; which diversity of colours would render them very beautiful, if they were taken a due Care of; for they neither wash nor clip their Sheep, nor have they any shears for that end; but pulls the wooll off them with their hands, which as it is painful to the beasts, so it makes them look not so well favoured, but like these with us, whose wool is scratched with briars or thorns.

Their ordinary drink.

Their ordinary drink is Milk or Water, or Milk and Water together, or a drink which they call *Bland*, most common in the Countrey, tho not thought to be very wholesome; which so they make up, having taken away the Butter from their churned Milk, as likewise the thicker parts of this Milk which remains after the Butter is taken out, they then pour in some hot Water upon the Serum, Whey or the thinner part of the Milk in a proportion to the Milk. Which being done they make use of it for their drink, keeping some for their Winter provision: And this drink is so ordinary with them, that there are many People in the Countrey who never saw Ale or Beer all their Lifetime; The Ale is rare among them, they making bread of much of their Barley-grain, but the *Hamburgh* Beer both small and strong is to be had in plenty tho at a good rate 6 *sh.* or 8 *sh.* our pint, which Beer and other Liquors, as also wheat Bread the *Hamburghers* bring with them in the Month of *May* for Sale, hence sometimes Liquors as Beer, Ale &c. cannot be had for money, till the *Hamburghers* bring it.

Viſtuals de arer then in *Orkney*.

The great confluence of strangers makes Kine, Sheep, Hens and almost all Viſtuals to sell at a greater rate, then in *Orkney*, for often when the *Bushes* are here, they will give Double or Triple for a Sheep, or a Hen, then it is to be bought in *Orkney* for, for the *Hollanders* with their *Bushes* being Numerous on these Coasts, they send sometimes a shore to buy fresh meats, which if to be had, they will not want for the price.

Fowls in plenty.

They have Fowls especially Sea-Fowls in great plenty

ty which do frequent the Rocks, Holms, &c. which they take as they do in *Orkney*, and are very beneficial to the Proprietours. There are also many Eagles, which do great prejudice and hurt to the Countrey; for the Lambs they will lift up in their Claws, and take whole to their Nests, and falling down upon the Sheep, they fix one foot on the ground and the other on the Sheep's back, which they having so apprehended, they ist. pick out their eyes, and then use the Carcases as they please. All sorts of Duck and Drake, Dunter-Geese, Cleck-Geese, Ember-Geese &c. they have as in *Orkney*.

They have many Crows but neither here nor in *Ork- Crowes.*  
*ney* are they of that Colour which they are of with us, for their Head, Wings, and Tail, only are black, but their Back and Breast from the Neck to the Tail are of a Grey Colour, and the Countrey People look upon it as a bad *Omen*, when black Crows come to these Isles, they portending that a Famine will shortly ensue.

There are many Conies in some places, but no Hares, Many rabbits, no  
neither are there any Moorfowls which are numerous in *Orkney*; some say that a few from *Orkney* have been brought over for triall, but they could not live here: mair  
No Poddocks or Froggs are to be seen, tho many in *Orkney*. Neither are there any Rats to be found, except in some Isles, and these are greater then ordinary, hares, few  
and thought to come out of Ships, when riding at Anchor nigh to the shore, but they have Mice in abundance. Neither are there any venomous Creatures in these Isles. They have many Ottars, one of which was so tamed that it frequently used to bring Fishes out of the Sea to a Gentleman's House in *Haskashie*, as one told me who knew the Truth thereof. rats; no  
frogs or  
venomous  
creatures.

They have a sort of little Horses called *Shelties*, then Concern-  
which no other are to be had, if not brought hither: ing their  
from other places, they are of a less Size then the *Ork- horses cal-*  
*ney* Horses, for some will be but 9 others 10. Nives or led shelties  
Hand-breadths high, and they will be thought big Hor-  
ses



ses there if eleven, and although so small yet are they full of vigour and life, and some not so high as others often prove to be the strongest, yea there are some, whom, an able Man can lift up in his arms, yet will they carry him and a Woman behind him 8. Miles forward and as many back: Summer or Winter they never come into an House, but run upon the Mountains in some places in flocks, and if at any time in Winter the storm be so great, that they are straitned, for food, they will come down from the Hills, when the Ebb is in the Sea, and eat the Sea-ware (as likewise do the Sheep) which Winter storme and scarcity of fodder puts them out of Case, and bringeth them so very low, that they recover not their strength till about St. Joh'ns Mals-Day, the 24th. of June when they are at their best: They will live till a Considerable Age as 26, 28. or 30. Years, and they will be good riding Horses in 24. especially they'll be the more vigorous and live the longer, if they be 4. Years old before they be put to Work. These of a black Colour are Judged to be the most durable, and the pyeds often prove not so good; they have been more numerous then now they are the best of them are to be had in *Sanston* and *Eston*, also they are good in *Waes* and *Tell*, these of the least Size are in the Northern Isles of *Tell* and *Unst*.

The Coldness of the Air, the Barrenness of the Mountains on which they feed, and their hard usage may occasion them to keep so little, for if bigger Horses be brought into the Countrey, their kind within a little time will degenerate; And indeed in the present case, we may see the Wisdome of Providence, for their way being deep and Mossie in Many places, these lighter Horses come through, when the greater and heavier would sink down: and they leap over ditches very nimbly, yea up and down rugged Mossy braes or hillocks with heavy riders upon them, which I could not look upon but with Admiration, yea I have seen them climb up braes upon their knees, when otherwise they could

could not get the height overcome, so that our Morfes would be but little if at all servicable there.

The great Fishing which they have upon the Coasts, Their makes the place desirable to the Natives, and to be fre-<sup>fishes nu-</sup> quented by strangers; it excelling any other place of <sup>merous.</sup> the *King of Brittan's Dominions* for Herring, White and Grey Fishing: the White Fishing they call the Killin and Ling &c. their Grey, the Silluks and seths; there are also sometimes very strange Fishes here to be found, As about 24. Years ago, there came a great number of small thick Fishes into a Voe on the South side of *Nelson*, they were of a Golden Colour, very pleasant to behold, they were about the bigness of an ordinary Trout, and all of an equal Size; they being very numerous, the Countrey made much use of them, who Judged them very savoury, tasting Like a Turbot: And never before or since that time were these Fishes seen, in these seas: As my Informer an old Gentleman could remember. Their Tusk is a rare Fish but more ordinary with them, of which more when we come to speak of their Fishing. Also many rare Shells are to be found on the Coasts, but we had not time to enquire and look after them.

Through the Isles for fewel they have good Pites <sup>Fewel.</sup> in abundance; tho, in some places they are at a distance from them, as these who live in the *Skerries* are obliged to bring them from other Isles, as from *Whalsey*, and the passage being dangerous many boats are cast away with them; some also living in *Dunroßness* are at a loss this way, they not having the Moss at hand, as generally they have in other places on the *Main*. Much broken Timber also is driven ashore upon these Isles, so that the Inhabitants of the *Skerries* trust the one half of their provision to this driven timber: and broken Ships in great quantiry often cast ashore; partly through the many Ships that spleet on these Isles, and partly as the wrack of Ships cast away at some distance, which is brought



brought here by the Ebb from *Norway*; or other places lying to the East of *Zetland*.

No trees,

There are no trees in this Countrey more then in *Orkney*, we saw some old white and weather beaten Stocks standing in *Scalloway*, for whatever Reasons may be alledged for trees not growing in *Orkney*, far more do I Judge they will hold in *Zetland* both with Respect to the Air and to the Soil: There are also at *Scalloway* some Goose and Rizzer-berrie bushes which use every Year to be laden with fruit, which are a great rarity in this place of the World.

Many excellent herbs, Scurvey grafs in abundance.

Many excellent Herbs are found growing here, tho little known or made use of: A Certain English Physician and skilled Botanist who was at *Lerwick* some Years ago told our Host, that there were many choice and rare Herbs here not to be found in *England*, They have much scurvey-Grafs; God so ordering it in his wise Providence that *juxta venenum, nascitur Antidotum*, that seeing the scurvey is the common Disease of the Countrey, they should have the Remedy at hand.

Much Lime-Stone.

There is here much Lime-stone (tho for ought I heard not to be found in *Orkney*) which in some places they have but lately come to the knowledge of, as in *Unst* but about 4. Years since; and in other places they know not yet how to use it, The Parish of *Tingwall* (they say) consists almost of Lime-stone, they having few if any other stones then such.

Stones for building, broad.

The stones wherewith they build are generally broad, and like Flag-stones; by reason of which figure and shape the stones lying the more easily, the builders are at less trouble in fitting them for the wall; and I have observed that in some Houses there is little Lime, clay or any such thing for cementing of the building, which renders their dwelling so much the colder, the peircing Air passing through between the Chinks of the Stones, which they have no need of under this cold and airish Climate. But some of these Houses they may designedly so build, that the Wind may have free passage

sage through them, for drying of their Fishes, which Houles some calls *keos*.

There are several superstitious Customs and Practices, which the more Ignorant People follow, some of which we will have occasion to note in the sequel of this Discourse, but not so many did we hear of, as there are in *Orkney*. But I hope the vigilance and Diligence of our Church in inspecting these Isles, and putting all to their Duty, will prove a blessed Mean in the hand of God, for the eradicating and utter abolishing of these Relicks of Paganism and Idolatry.

Several  
supersti-  
tious Cu-  
stoms.

Sailing about these Coasts is often very dangerous, whence the Waters prove Graves to many of the Inhabitants. While we were there in the Month of May a Boat was cast away going by the shore to *Dunrossness*, and a Man and his Sister therein perished; and another Man in her was saved by getting upon the keel of the Boat, and sometimes Boats are cast away when not one saved: About the Isles are many blind Rocks, which the Natives sometimes unhappily fall and break upon, either through a Mistake, or the Tide and Wind driving them upon them: At other times the Wind rising, causeth the Sea so to swell that the Waves breaking upon their small Boats are ready to overlet them, and sometimes do: Altho the Wind be not so strong, there will come Flanns and Blasts off the Land as to their swiftness and surprisal something like to Hurricanes, which beating with a great Impetus or force upon their Sails, overturns the Boat, and in a moment hurries them into Eternity: By such a flann the *Laird of Munas* a Gentleman in this Countrey is said to have perished the former Year 1699. when within sight of his own House, and all that were in the Boat with him said to be 9. or 10. Persons, save one servant, who escaped upon the keel. I remember, that night we came to the Land of *Zetland*, our Seamen thought fit in their prudence not to Sail too nigh the Land for fear of such flanns.

sailing  
dangerous



to be as Watchmen on our Towers looking out and waiting for the Lord's coming.

Little  
Com-  
merce in  
the Win-  
ter.

For this cause it is, that during the Winter Season they have ordinarily Converse or Commerce with none, except that Ships be driven in by stress of Weather; for the open Boats dare not come, and the close-decked not without danger, the Sea commonly at that time being so tempestuous, the Tides and Roults so rapid, that they threaten all who come near them, with being swallowed up; Therefore it is, as they tell us, that from *October* till *April* or *May*, they Ordinarily see no strangers, nor know any News, which makes the Winter so much the longer and wearisome unto them: An Instance whereof we had, that the late Revolution, *when his Highness the Prince of Orange our present King* was pleased to come over to assert our Liberties, and deliver us from our fears, falling out in the Winter, it was *May* thereafter before they heard any thing of it, And that 1<sup>st</sup>. they say from a Fisher-Man, whom some would have had arraigned before them, and impeached of high Treason because of his News, as some did inform us.

They  
sometimes  
infested  
by Pirates.

Their Countrey lying very open, and in many places but thinly Inhabited, exposeth them to the Hostile incursions of Pirates in a time of War, as of late the *Frenches* did much infest their Coasts, some of their Men Landing did by shot Kill their Kine and Sheep, and take them away with them; yea sometimes they spared not the Churches, but sacrilegiously robbed them, pulling down the Timber thereof as Seats &c. and taking them for burnwood; so they did to a Church in *North Mevan*. But they never came into *Brassa Sound*, lest they had been locked up within Land, Winds turning contrary.

Some light  
all the  
Night  
over in  
*June*.

In the Month of *June* they have a clear light all the Night over, for at the darkeſt hour thereof, you will see clearly to read a Letter, the Sun ſetteth between 10. and 11. at Night, and riſeth between 1. and 2. in the

the Morning, but for this they have so much the shorter Day and longer Night in the Winter.

## C H A P. V I I.

A particular View is given of the several Parishes, and most considerable Isles in Zetland.

**T**HUS far having Considered the State of the Country in General, we come next to take some particular view of the Isles, which that I may the better and more methodically do, I shall lay before my Reader the several Parishes, with some brief description of the principal Isles therunto belonging. For as to the Number of the Isles, I never heard an Exact account given thereof, there being many of them small, wherein is only a Family or two, and so but little noticed.

A brief Description of the several Parishes with the Isles thereunto belonging.

The 1<sup>st</sup>. is the Parish of *Dunrossness* on the Mainland to the South, and is the Parish which lyes next to *Orkney* and *Scotland*, wherein are 3. Churches, in which their Minister performeth divine service, *Cross-Kirk*, *Sanwich*, and *Fair Isle*; In this Parish are several very good Voes or Harbours commodious for Ships to ride in. In this there is also much Corn-Land, the ground bearing the Richest Grain, in many places not so Mossy and covered over with Heath, as other Parishes are, which makes them to have less fewel, tho more corn. Much of the Land here is sanded, and the Sea almost Yearly gaineth something on the lower-parts thereof; the Land lying so low and sandy in many places, is convenient for Conies, which abound here about the Ness or southern most point of Land. In this Parish, there is a great Fishing, This southernmost point hath two Heads, *Swinburgh Head*, and *Fittalls Head*, two high rocks seen by Mariners coming from the South at a great distance, which when discovered, they direct their Course towards them.

Parish of *Dunrossness*.

*Swinburgh and Fittalls Head*



St. Ni-  
nians Isle.

To the North-West of the Ness lyes *St. Ninians Isle*, very pleasant; wherein there is a Chappel and ane Altar in it, where on some superstitious People do burn Candles to this Day. Some take this Isle rather to be a kind of Peninsula, joyned to the Main by a Bank of Sand, by which in an Ebb People may go into the Isle, tho sometimes not without danger.

The Fair  
Isle.

The *Fair Isle* belongeth to this Parish, lying 8. Leagues or 24. Miles to the South or South and by East of *Swinburgh Head*, by *Buchannan* it is called *Insula bella* the pleasant or pretty Isle, Tho I do Judge *FAIR* may be as well taken Properly as Appellatively, for the Isle *Faira* or *Fara*, there being another Isle lying to the North of this which they call *North Faira* which relates to another *Faira* by South; now there is no Isle lying to the South of this *North Faira*, which hath any name that can be interpreted *Faira*, but this Fair Isle. Moreover I neither did see, nor was I informed of any thing, that afford us any Reason, why this Isle should be so appellatively taken and denominated *bella* or *Fair*. This *Fair Isle* riseth high above the Waters, and is seen by Mariners at a great distance; it is about an Mile and a half long from South to North, and nigh to a Mile in breadth, the side thereof towards the West is a continued ragged rock from one end to another, always beat upon by the Impetuous currents of a swelling Sea, above this West-side is the Craig which they call the *Sheep-Craig*, whereon there are no Houses nor Corn-Land, but Sheep use to feed: The side, lying to the East is lower, declining towards the Sea; There are in it two Harbours, one upon the Northern-End, looking to *Zetland*, and another towards the Southern point, but Ships or Boats do not ordinarily resort thereunto, if not put to it, and better cannot do, for so it hath been a safe shelter and refuge to many.

Inhabi-  
tants and  
some  
Corn-Land  
and Pa-  
sture in  
*Fair Isle*.

There use to be about 10. or 12. Families in it, but now they say Death hath almost depopulate the Isle, the small Pox having lately raged there, and swept away

away two thirds of the Inhabitants, so that there is not a sufficient number spared to Manage their Fish-Boats; that Gentlemans Son abovementioned, having touched here in his way to *Zetland*: They have good Pasturage for Sheep and Kine, and some Corn-Land, and are very hospital and kind. Their Minister useth to Visite them once in the Year, in the Summer time, and staying with them about a Month, Preaching, Baptizing their Children and doing other parts of his Pastoral Work; after which he returning to *Zetland*, they are without publick Ordinances till the next Years Revolution.

The Hawks, they say, which are to be had in the *Fair Isle*, are the best in *Britain*, which use to flee to *Zetland*, or *Orkney* for their prey, these being the nearest <sup>Good Hawks there.</sup> Lands, and sometimes they'll find Moor Fowls in their Nests, which they behoved to bring from *Orkney*, seeing there are none in *Zetland*, and the nearest *Isle* they could have them in, was *Stronza* or *Westra*, which is between 40. and 50. Miles of Sea, over which at one flight they must carry these Fowls to their Nests.

Many Ships use to cruise about this *Fair Isle* in the Summer time, and by it the *Holland's* Fleet going to or coming from the East-Indies, use to pass, tho sometimes as in the late Wars they Sailed by the North of *Zetland*, that they might be more free of danger. Ships also going to or coming from *Norway* or the East Sea frequently pass this way, when Wind serveth them so to do; and this *Fair Isle* being seen by them at 14. or 16. leagues distance, in a clear Day it is as a Myth or Mark for directing their courses. <sup>Ships use to cruise there-about.</sup>

The 2d. is the Parish of *Tingwall* lying on the East <sup>Parish of</sup> of the *Main* to the North of *Dunrossness*, wherein are <sup>*Tingwall.*</sup> 4. Churches, *Tingwall*, *Whiteness*, *Wisedale* and *Lerwick*, but the Minister useth not to Preach by turns at *Lerwick*, as he doth at his other 3. Churches, he not finding himself obliged so to do, it being but built lately



lately at the expence of the Inhabitants, however sometimes he hath Sermon there, and Baptizeth their Children. *Lerwick* in this Parish is now become the Principal Toun in the Countrey, lying on the East of the main at *Brassa Sound*, over against the Isle of *Brassa*.

Town of  
*Lerwick*.

*Lerwick* is more then half a Mile in length, lying South and North upon the side of the Sound, and will consist of between 2. and 300. Families, it is but within these few Years, that it hath arrived to such a number of Houses and Inhabitants. It is become so considerable, because of the many Ships which do Yearly frequent the Sound, whereby Merchants and Trades-Men are encouraged to come and dwell in this place, and not for the pleasantness of its Situation, or the fertility of the Countrey about, for it is built upon a Rocky peice of Ground, wherein they can have no street, but a kind of a narrow passage before their doors, betwixt them and the Sound, which in some places will not admit of two Mens going in a breast, and at the back of the Toun there is a Hill of black Moss, wherein they cast their Pites, which in some places cometh to their very doors, and no Corn-Land is there about it, save a little within the Castle, for near a Mile of way.

Many of their Houses, are very Commodious to dwell in, most of them being two stories high, and well furnished within, their Inhabitants consist of Merchants Trades-Men, and Fishers, who keep up a good Trade with Foreigners, from whom they buy much of their domestick provision, some of them are Persons of a Considerable Stock, which they have many ways to improve for their advantage. They are very Civil and kind, of an obliging temper, which we had the Experience of, during our abode among them; there are but few begging poor to be seen here, or in any place of the Countrey, where we had occasion to be; there being a great store of small Fishes, for the supply of their necessity.

They

They have upon their own Charges Built a convenient Church, at the back of the middle of the Town, and furnished it with good Seats high and low, they are at present a part of the Parish of *Tingwal*, but very desirous to be disjoined, and erected into a Parish by themselves, that so they may enjoy a Minister of their own: For the promoting of which good Work, they are most willing according to their Ability to Contribute for the settling of a Fond for a Stipend to a Minister, but not being in a Capacity to give all, they resolved to make Application to the Government, for to have some Allowance out of the Revenues of the Bishoprick of *Orkney*, or otherwise as the Wisdom of the Government should see meet, that so there may be a Competency made up.

A Church built in *Lerwick*, but no Minister settled there.

Upon their application to us, we judging it most convenient, yea necessary, that this Town with some of the adjacent Countrey, should be Erected into a Paroch, che shed this their pious design; Telling them, that we intended, to recommend it, to the Commission of the General Assembly: That they may interpose, with the Lords, and other Honourable Members of the respective Judicatories, before whom this affair shall come, for the better effectuating the same. For the Town it self is considerable, and the principal one in the Countrey, much frequented by the Gentry; As also, by Strangers, in the Summer time. And their Minister Preaching seldom here, they are ordinarily destitute of Gospel-Ordinances; The People scarce being able, in the Summer season, and all most impossible for them in the Winter, to travel to the next Church, where their Minister Preacheth: It being about 4 Miles distance from them, of exceeding bad way. As we knew, when we did perambulate the bounds. Which want of Ordinances, maketh their Case very sad and deplorable; It nurseth ignorance; Occasioneth much Sin, especially horrid prophanation of the Lords-Day, by

Fit this Town be Erected into a Parish.

strang-



strangers, as well as by inhabitants; And doth effectually obstruct the conversion of Souls; Preaching of the Word being a special mean of convincing and converting Sinners, and building them up in Holiness, and comfort through Faith, unto Salvation.

Citidale of  
*Lerwick*

At the North end of the Town, is the *Castle* or *Citadel*, of *Lerwick*, begun to be built in the time, of the *Dutch War* Anno 1665. By Work-men sent by *Authority* from *Scotland*, for that end, but the Work was never perfected, the Work-men, returnig home, Anno, 1667. At that time also 300 Souldiers were sent over for the Defence of the Countrey, against the hostile Incursions of the *Hollanders*, and were quartered in places nigh to the Fort, who likewise returned home about the same time, with the Workmen: The Garrison could do much to command the Sound (for then there was no Town here) so that none durst Land nigh unto them; The walls are yet in a good condition, high in some places without, but filled up with Earth within, whereon they raised their Cannon; in the weakest part of the Wall towards the North, there hath been a Sally-port, dangerous to Attack, by reason of a deep Ditch before it, fed by a Spring, into which the Garrison by cunning Artifices might endeavour to draw the Enemy, who by the Stratagems of War thus being brought on, and ensnared, did incontinently sink down into the Sound below them at the foot of the Hill, whereupon the Castle is situated: Within the Walls is a House of Guard, which hath been two Stories high, burnt by the *Dutch*, after that our Souldiers had left the Fort. Upon the Walls towards the Sound, are standing 3 Iron Cannons one a 6. another a 7. and a 3d. a 10 Pounder, not left by these who kept Garrison, but since that time within these 30 Years taken out of the Sea nigh to *Whalsey*, a Ship of Force there being cast away, about 80. Years before: Which Guns the Inhabitants of *Lerwick* lately mounted upon the Walls of the Castle, whereby they might

might be in a Capacity to Defend themselves against the *French Privateers*, who at any time should come up the Sound and Assault them.

Between *Lerwick* and the Isle of *Brassa* on the East *Brassa* lyeth a pleasant Bay or Sound, commonly called *Brassa Sound*. *Sound*, Famous for its being so safe a Road for Ships to Anchor and Ride in, and that in the greatest Storm, being enclosed with Land on every side, except the Entry thereunto from the South, which is half a Mile broad, but within the Sound as at *Lerwick* its a Mile, it hath another narrow passage at the North end of it, but dangerous to go out or in at, because of some blind Rocks therein. This Sound is the ordinary place to which the *Holland* *Bushes* do resort in time of Herring Fishing, who before they put out their Nets, (which must not be, according to a Law they have among themselves, before the 24<sup>th</sup> June,) use to come here and put themselves Ships, and Nets in order, and the time by them appointed being come, they all go to Sea together. Fishing near to this Land: Sometimes there have been seen in the Sound 2000. or 2200. Sail at once, and every Year some Hundreds as 5. 6. or 700, Yea sometimes so thick do the Ships ly in the Sound, that they say Men might go from one side of the Sound to the other, stepping from Ship to Ship; and during their Fishing they will come in to the Sound for fresh Water, or other necessary Provision, and return to Sea again.

To this Parish of *Tingwal* also belongeth *Scalloway*, *Scalloway*. lying on the West side of the *Mainland*, 4. Miles, which is the breadth of the Country in that place, from *Lerwick*. It was formerly the cheif Town in the Country, and the Seat of the Presbytry, enjoying by far a pleasanter situation then *Lerwick* about which is good Grass and Corn and some Meadow, betwixt which and the Church of *Tingwal*, is the *Strath* of *Tingwal*, two Miles of hard even and pleasant way; They say about *Scalloway* is as pleasant a spot as is in all this



Country. In all the Town there will be scarce 80. or 100 Persons, there not being such Encouragement by Trade to live here, as at *Lerwick*.

At the East or South East end of the Town stands the Castle of *Scalloway* built An. 1600. By *Patrick Earl of Orkney* Son to *Robert Stewart* also Earl of Orkney, who built the Palace of *Birsa* formerly mentioned: Above the Gates as we enter into the Houle, there is this Inscription *Patricius Orchadia & Zetlandia Comes*, and below the Inscription this Distich, *Cujus fundamen saxum est, domus illa manebit; Labilis e contra, si sit arena, perit.* That Houle whose Foundation is on a Rock shall stand; But if on the Sand it shall fall. The reason of the Inscription is reported to be this, The Earl greatly Oppressed both *Orkney* and *Zetland*; and particularly at the building of this House, his hand lay very heavy on the poor People, by causing them in great numbers to be imployed about the Building, which could not but divert them from their ordinary Work as Fishing &c. whereby they provided Sustinance for themselves and Families. After this, one Mr. *Puccarn Minister of North-Mevan*, said to be a Godly and Zealous Man, coming to pay his Respects to the Earl, the Earl desired him to Compose a Verse, which he might put upon the Frontis peice of his House; from this the Minister took occasion to lay before the Earl his great Sin of Oppression, upon which the Earls anger was incensed, and in his Rage he threatned him with Imprisonment. However the Earl afterwards coming to some Composure of Spirit; Mr. *Puccarn* said unto him, well if you will have a Verse, I shall give you one from expresse words of Holy Scripture *Luke 6*, which Verse the Earl being pleased with, caused Inscribe it on the Lintle above the Gate, with *Luke 6.* added to the Verse, The Minister thereby insinuating that this House could not stand long, having such a Sandy Foundation as Oppression. As indeed neither did it, for shortly

shortly after the Earl being Beheaded, the House was not taken care of, and is now become ruinous.

And herein the Wise Providence of God may be observed, that as the Inscription on the Gate of the Palace of Birsá in Orkney did hold forth the Ambition of the Father, so this Inscription on the Gate of the Castle of Scalloway in Zetland, did shew the Oppression of the Son; and tho it be many Years since the death of them both, yet the very Houses built by them, to make their Honour and Grandour to appear, do yet stand to their Dishonour and Infamy, and in a manner do bear Witnels against them: So truly verified in them, is that Scripture. *That tho the inward thoughts of great men be that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; Nevertheless they being in honour and not understanding, are like the beasts that perish. And the Righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance: But the Name of the wicked shall rot.* Observe thereupon. Psal. 49. 11. & 20. Psal. 112. 6. Pro. 10. 7.

This House or Castle is 3 Stories high beside Kitchens, and Wardrobe, and hath in it many excellent Chambers, and other Apartments with their several Conveniences; Also there hath been much good painting, some of which is yet to be seen, tho much defaced; the Chambers are high between floors, but especially the Gallery or Dining Room: In the Kitchen there is a Well in the side of the Wall, the water whereof is very good, tho little used: The Sclaits have for the most part fallen from the Roof, and are daily falling with every Storm, so that the Timber, much of which is yet very good and fresh is beginning to rot and consume, by the rain falling through the house from floor to floor. The stone Walls are yet in a good Condition, they being considerable thick; In the building are many free-stones as Lintels, Jams &c. which they say were brought from Scotland. I give a more particular account of this House, because Built in this Country, and to shew how Transient, Passing and Perishing, the Glory and Riches of the World are In

A Description  
thereof,



this *Castle of Scalloway* some *English* Souldiers for some time kept Garrison, when their Army was in *Scotland*.

The Church of *Wisdale*, which belongeth to this Church of *Parish* is much frequented by the Superstitious Country *Wisdale*. People, who light Candles therein, drop Money in and about it, go on their bare knees round it, and to which in their Straits and Sickness they have their Recourse, yea some are so silly as to think, that if they be in any distress, tho not at this Church, yet if they turn their faces to it, God will hear them. One of the Justices told us, that tho they have laid out themselves to get these Superstitious Conceits Eradicated, yet they cannot get it altogether effectuated, but still they continue among the People. A Minister also told me, that it was much frequented by Women, who when they desire to Marry, went to this Church making their Vowes and saying their Prayers there, so assuring themselves, that God would cause Men come in suit of them; But this is not now so much in use as formerly.

Isle of *Troudra*. Before *Scalloway* lyeth a little Isle called *Troudra* two or three Miles long, wherein are a few Families.

Parish of *Neston*. The third Parish is *Neston* to the East of the *Main*, to which belongs 4 Churches, two on the *Main*, and other two in Isles; In *Neston* is good Harbours and many Grey Fishes.

Isle of *Whalsey*. To the N. East lyes the Isle of *Whalsey*, wherein is a Church, it is about three Miles long, and as many broad. Here are great Rats and very numerous, which do infest the Isle, destroying their Corns and other Goods.

The *Skerries*. From *Whalsey* to the East lies the *Skerries*, several broken Isles, wherein is a Church, here are two good Harbours, but dangerous to enter, by reason of Rocks that ly before them, but when in, Ships will ride very safely: There are no Pites in them, but many Ships

Ships being cast away upon them, the Inhabitants make use of the Wreck for Burn-wood, and also bring some Pites from *Whalley*. Here was cast away that great and Rich Ship, called the *Carmelan* of *Amsterdam* An. 1664. when the War was between us and the *Hollanders*, computed to the value of 3000000. of *Guilders*, wherein were some Chests of Coined Gold (of which more above in our *Description* of *Orkney*) and none of the Men as they report, were saved but 4 who were on the Top-mast, discovering the Land; But before they could give timeous advertilement to the Captain, the Ship struck on a Rock, and the Mast breaking by the Deck, the Top thereof fell on one of the skerries, and so these 4 Men perished not with the rest of their Company; They say for 20 days after the Inhabitants of the *Skerries* drank liberally of the strong Liquors driven on shore in Casks. It is said this Ship so Richly Laden was bound for the *East-Indies*.

In the way from *Brassa Sound* to *Nelson*, lyes the Blind Rock called the *Unicorn*, the Top whereof is seen at a low Ebb, upon which the Ship called the *Unicorn* was cast away, wherein was *William Kircaldy* of *Grange*, who pursuing the Earl of *Bothwell*, followed him so close, that they were within Gun-shot of one another, but *Bothwell* coming first through *Brassa Sound* got in a Pilot, which *Grange* neglecting to do, they both sailed through the Northern passage of *Brassa Sound*; and *Bothwells* Pilot having a great Reward promised him, if they should escape, ran down by the side of this Rock upon which the *Unicorn* did spleet, and so *Bothwell* got free of the danger he was in, by this hot pursuit. It is most dangerous Sailing among these Isles without a Pilot.

The Rock  
called the  
*Unicorn*.

The 4th Parish is *Delton* on the Main, wherein are two Churches, it lyeth North-East and South East; Here are many Grey Fishes taken, whereas in the Northern

Parish of  
*Delton*.



thern Isles of *Unst* and *Tell* they lay out themselves more for the taking of White Fish as Killing Ling, &c.

Isles of *Fishholm*, *Rue*, and on the West *Meikle Rue*, 8 Miles long, and *Meikle Rue* two Miles broad, wherein a good Harbour. All these *and little Rue* Isles have their own advantages.

The parish of *Sanfing* and *Efing* lying on the Main between *Delton* and *Waes* wherein are two Kirks, one in *Sanfing*, and another in *Efing*. The way in this Parish is very bad, and the People are said to be among the poorest and naughtiest in all the Countrey; Here is good pasture for Sheep, and the best Wool; As also the best Shelties.

The Isles of *Nigh* to *Sanfing* and *Efing* ly several smal pleasant *Vemantrie* Isles, as *Vemantrie* a pleasant Isle full of Harbours, *Oxney* &c. *Oxney*, *Papa little*, *Halesha* &c.

Paroch of *Waes*. The 6<sup>th</sup> is *Waes* on the Main to the West, to it belongs 4 Churches, one in *Waes*, another in *Sananesf*, the 3<sup>d</sup> in the Isle of *Papa-flour*, and the 4<sup>th</sup> in the Isle of *Fowla*. To the South of *Waes* lyeth the Isle of *Vaila*, wherein a Cat will not live, of which more afterwards.

The Isle of *Papa-flour* is said to be the pleasantest little Isle in all this Countrey, two Miles long, and well furnished with Fewel, Grass, Corn, Rabbits, &c. In it are 4 good Harbours, one to the South, two to the North, and one to the West, nigh to this Isle lyes the *Lyra-Skerries*, so called, because the Lyres (these Fat Fowls, spoken of in our *Description of Orkney*,) do frequent this Skerrie.

Isle of *Fowla*. *Fowla* lyes about 18 Miles West from the Main, it is about 3 Miles long, wherein a high Rock scen at a great distance, I have heard some say, that in a calm and clear Day, they will see it from *Orkney*: There is only one place in it for Harboursing, which if you do not hit, you will be driven to the Sea, what by Wind and Tide. Their Cornland is all in one end of it; And the Inhabitants live most by Fowls and Eggs, which are very

very numerous, and they are the best Climbers of Rocks in all the Countrey.

The 7th is *North-Mewan* on the Main lying to the North, wherein are three Kirks, *Hilswick*, *Oloberry* and *North-Rhae*, they Report, the People of this Parish to be discreet and civilized, beyond their Neighbouring Parishes; Which, under God, is owing, to the labours of Mr. *Hercules Sinclair*, sometime Minister there, reputed to be Zealous and faithful: He, in his Zeal, against superstition, rased *Cross-Kirk*, in this Parish; Because the People superstitiously frequented it: And, when demolished, behind the place where the Altar stood, and also beneath the Pulpit, were found several peices of Silver in various shapes, brought thither as offerings by afflicted People, some being in the form of a Head, others of an Arm, others of a Foot, accordingly as the offerers were distressed in these parts of the Body; As a Freind of his a present Minister in the Countrey, did inform me. O that the pains and expence these superstitious Souls have been at, might excite, us the more dutifully to serve and Worship our God in Spirit and in Truth. There are also many mo People in this Parish, who can Write and Read, and give a tolerable account of their proficiency in the knowledge of the principles of Religion, then there are in others.

Before it lyes *Lamma* a small pleasant Isle; As also another to the West-North-West.

The 8th is *Brassa* an Isle to the East of *Tingwal* and *Lerwick* to which three Churches do belong, two in *Brassa*, but only in one of them they use to attend Ordinances, the other being built nigh to the Manse, for their late old Ministers Accommodation. *Brassa* is a-bour 5 Miles long and two broad, all covered with Heather, except some Cornland by the Coasts; Before *Brassa* to the East, lyes the *Noss* of *Brassa*, a small Isle wherein is one Family, it hath a high Rock lying open to the East Sea, and seen by Mariners at a distance.

The



Isle of  
*Burra.*

The Minister of *Burra* also hath a Church in the Isle of *Burra*, which he goeth to every 2<sup>d</sup> Sabbath, it lyeth nigh to the Mainland West-South-West from *Scalloway*, so that the Minister is obliged to travel from the East to the West side of the Mainland, when he goeth to this his Church. The Isle will be three Miles

Isle of *Haveroy.*

long divided in the middle into two small Isles, by a Seabreak. The Church is very large and hath a high Steeple in it. To the South-South East of *Burra* lyes *Haveroy* a Mile and an half long. Both in *Burra* and *Haveroy* is good Pasture, and about them good Fishing.

Parish of  
*Tell.*

The 9<sup>th</sup> is *Tell*, an Isle North-East and by the East from the *Main* 16 Miles long, and as to breadth, it is much like the figure 8 because of the many Creeks and Voes which divide and cut the Land, yet in some places it is 6 or 8 Miles broad. In it are 3 Churches and many old little Chappels, it is more Mossey then some other Isles, tho there be in it some good Pasturage and Cornland; To the East of *Tell* lyes *Haskashie* 2 Miles long, to the South West *Samphrey*, one Mile long, to the West South-West *Biggai*, a Mile and an half long, all pleasant, and well grassed, having much Fewel, and especially excellent for Fishing, for if the Wind blow from the West, the Boats can ly on the East, if from the East, they can ly on the West side of these Isles and that nigh to the Shore.

Isle of  
*Fetlor.*

To the E. N. East of *Tell* lyes *Fetlor*, 5 Miles long, and 4 broad, in it some Chappels and Picts Houses, as there are likewise in several other of the Isles; In this Isle there is a Church, wherein the Minister of *Tell* preacheth every 4<sup>th</sup> Sabbath, it used formerly to have been served by a Preaching Deacon, but the Vicar by his Diligence hath got the Minister of *Tell* also obliged to serve in *Fetlor*, tho *Tell* be more than sufficient for any one Man to have the charge of.

Parish of  
*Unst.*

The 10<sup>th</sup>. Parish is *Unst*, 8 Miles long, and 4 Miles broad in many places, in it 3 Churches, it is said to be the largest pleasant Isle in all this Country, In it also 3 Harbours, *Uzza Sound*, *Balta Sound*, and *Burra Firth*, here

here some good Corn-land and Pasturage, also several old Chappels (of which more afterwards) A little Isle called *Uzra* lyeth off *Unst* a Mile and an half long, as likewise several pleasant Holms. *Unst* is the most Northern Isle in the *King of Britains Dominions*, under the 61 degree of latitude. Isles of *Unst* and *Uzra*.

Thus I have given some account of the several Principalishes within the bounds of the Isles and Countrey of *Zetland*, and hinted at, if not all, yet the greatest part of the Isles, the Principal whereof are *Unst*, *Tell*, *Fetlor*, *Braça* and *Burra*. Principal Isles.

Whence we see there is no Minister here, but hath at least 2 Churches, wherein he dispenseth Gospel Ministers Ordinances, and some of them have 3, and others 4. exposed to much trouble and danger. Some of which Churches are at a great distance from one another, to travel to which is not only to some and dangerous to the Respective Ministers, they also not having little Manles or Houses for their Accomodation, when they come to many of them; tho often when Storms do arise, they will be detained in the Isles, for some time until they lessen: Not only I say, is this troublesome to the Ministers, but highly prejudicial to the People, among whom the Work of the Gospel is greatly thereby retarded (as we had occasion likewise to note concerning *Orkney*) few of the People using to repair to other Churches, when there is not publick Worship at their own, which at most will be but one of two Sabbaths, and in many places but one in three or four, and in some not to be had for some Moneths, which as undoubtedly it occasioneth great Ignorance; so many gross Scandals, as Adulteries, Fornications &c. The Faithful preaching of the Gospel doing much if not to convince and convert, yet to moralise a People and put a restraint to these horrid Enormities.

And tho the difficulty would not be small, if at all There it could be got done to have Ministers constantly to could be preach in the several Chuches, even in the most considerable Isles, yet there might be some moe Ministers some moe Parishes here.

M here



## A Description

here than there are, 4 or 5 at least to whom the Tithes if rightly imployed could afford a sufficient maintenance; As one Minister more in the parish of *Dunrossness* on the main, and another in the Isle of *Tell &c.* which Charges at present are very great, and cannot well be served by the Ministers they have. The Tithes are farmed to Viccars, a kind of inferiour Tacksmen, who in some places do not only oppress the People, but are uneasy to the Ministers, not paying them what they are obliged to pay, till they please; which often they will not do for some years. The Ministers suffering by this piece of Injustice, laid it before the Commission, as one of their Greivances, which they craved might be redressed, and for that end, Application might be made to the Government,

## C H A P. VIII.

An account of the Ancient Monuments, Curiosities, strange Providences, &c. most observable in the Isles of *Zetland*.

Observ-  
able  
things in  
*Zetland*.

**T**HE Works of Creation and Providence are all very wonderful, sought out of them who have pleasure therein, among which some more ordinarily occur and are the subject of our meditation, and others not so commonly presenting themselves are the more surprising and amusing, both which are to be had a due regard unto, they being either mediately or immediatly, by or without 2d. Causes, the Work of the Lord, and the Operation of his Hands: And seing there are some things that deserve their own observation, which either I had occasion to see, or to hear of in *Zetland*, I shall give a brief Relation thereof, not denying but that there may be other things no less if not more observable there, which we came not to the knowledge of.

The

The Picts Houses which are frequent through this Countrey, the Inhabitants take much notice of, as being the Ancientest Monuments they have, some of which are more, others less ruinous, they are round in the form of some Dove-coats, or something like unto an Egg bulging out in the middle, but narrower at the bottom, and yet more narrow at the top, They have a little door for an entry, at which a man of an ordinary stature could not enter without bowing, within which door, there is a Stair going up between two Stone Walls, leading to the several Apartments, instead of Windows they have Slits or long narrow Holes in the Wall, such as are in many of our old Castles for the conveyance of light unto them; they are strongly built, but the conveniency for dwelling hath been but little, for their Diameter is but about 10 or 12 Foot, and their height scarce 20 or 24, I think these Picts Houses are much like *Arthurs Oven* upon the Water of *Carron* in *Stirling-Shire*.

Concern-  
ing the  
Picts Hou-  
ses.

These have been the Domiciles or Dwellings of the Picts, the old if not the first Inhabitants of this Countrey, who were very numerous in the *North of Scotland*, and in *Orkney*, having their own Kings, as hath been said in our *Description of Orkney*. They are conveniently situated through the Isles, each one being within the sight of another, hence in a few hours, advertisement could be given by Fire, or other signs they might condescend upon, through the whole Countrey, signifying unto them any danger, that being thereby alarmed, they might meet together, or be upon their own defence. These Houses are also called *Burghs*, which in the old Teutonick or Saxon Language, signifyeth a Town having a Wall or some kind of an Enclosure about it; as also a Castle, for as one observeth in his *Dictionary*, or *Explanation of our most ancient English words*; All places that in old time had among our Ancestours the name of *Burrough*, *Bury* or *Burug* were places one way or other fenced and fortified. Whence it appears, that these Houses

Observe  
thereupon

*Rich: Ver-  
fegan in  
his Anti-  
quities of  
the English  
Nation  
and their  
Saxon  
Kings.*



have been Castles, or places of Defence, to the Picts. Seing it is generally acknowledged, that both the Picts, and the Saxons, were originally descended, of the same *German Nation* : and so might call their Castles, by the same name. I have also heard it observed, That in *Orkney*, several places, wherein they used of old to bury their Dead were called Burghs, so likewise these Houses in *Zetland* might serve for the same purpose, from the Saxon Word *Byring*, or *Burging*, or *Borogeing*, which we now call *Burying*.

No place  
called  
*Thule* here

I enquired if there was any Place or Hill here, which they called *Thule* or *Ule*, if so be we could receive any Information or Light from them concerning the *Thule of the Ancients*, but they answered they knew none of that name, on'y there was an Isle, wherein a high Hill called *Foula*, on the west side of the Mainland, but to suppose that ever the *Ancient Romans* understood *Thule* thereby, beside other things that might be alledged, it would be a manifest *stretching* of, and an offering violence to the word : But altho what this place is, hath been much controverted, by Ancient and Modern Authors attempting the Discovery thereof, yet it is generally agreed upon, that it is toward the North, and many take it to be one of the British Isles, and a late Author in an *Essay concerning the Thule of the Ancients*, endeavoureth to prove it to be the *North East part of Britain*, lying over against the Isles of *Orkney*, citing some Authors to this purpose, as " *Conradus Celtes. Orca-*  
" *dibus qua cineta suis Tyle & Glacialis Insula & Clau-*  
" *dian, Maduerunt sanguine fuso Orcades incaluit*  
" *Pictorum sanguine Thule; Scotorum cumulos flevit*  
" *glacialis Ierne.* And others who call *Thule, Britannicarum Insularum septentrionalissimam*, the most Northern of the British Isles. *Island* also lays claim to it, and the above cited Author supposeth *Island* to be the *Thule*, but I judge without any shadow of Truth, for beside what is now said, I greatly doubt if ever the *Romans* had the knowledge of *Island*, their Eagles never having come,  
and

Cour. Cel.  
Itinere  
Balth.

Rich. Ver-  
stegan.

and been displayed to the North of Scotland, or Orkney; *Impertu fuerat Romani Scotia limes.* Saith the great Scalliger. Ptolomey will have it to be among the Isles of Zetland, and Boeth. our Historian distinguisheth between a 1st and a 2d. Thule calling *Ila* the 1st. and *Leuisa* the 2d, which are reckoned among the Isles called *Hebrides*: So saith Boeth. "*Ptolomæus inter Schethlandi-*  
"*cas insulas quæ ultra Orchades sunt, aut proxime*  
"*Norvegiam sitam vult, haud quaquam propter immen-*  
"*sam intercapedinem intelligi potest. Nos autem Ilam*  
"*primam Leuisam Hebridum præstantissimam secundam*  
*Thulen vocamus.* But I incline to think, that altho some might design a particular place by the Thule, yet generally by a Synecdoche usual with the Roman Authors, they might denote all these places remote from them to the North, and especially *Britain*, and the Northern parts thereof, whether their Arms did come.

*Hec. Boeth Hist.*

In the Parish of *North-Meyan* is *Mons Ronaldi* or *Rons Hill*, the highest in all this Country, from which some do say, they will see the Body of the Sun all the Night over in the Moneth of *June*; which cannot be for the Reason alledged in our *Description of Orkney* why it could not be seen from the top of the Hill of *Hoy*; tho Reason and Experience shew they have a clearer Light in Zetland, in the Night time, during the Summer Season, then they can have in Orkney; Zetland being more then a degree to the North of Orkney and consequently ay the farther North, the shorter Night, till at length there be no Night at all, so that if it were possible to sail holding a Northern Course, till we were under the Pole, having it for our Zenith or Vertical Point, we would have a continual Day without any Night for several Moneths, the Sun all that time describing a Circle almost parallel to our Horizon, I say, almost parallel, because beside the Diurnal, there is also the Annual Motion of the Sun in the Eclyptick. O how exact and beautiful an order and symmetrie is to be

*Mons Ronaldi or Rons-Hill the highest in the Country.*



be seen in the Works of God; they all speaking forth the goodness, Wisdom and Power of their Maker.

A Reflection  
thereupon

What a wonderful Creature is the Sun, *Coming forth as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber, and rejoicing as a strong Man to run his Race*, abolving every day his circuit round our Terrestrial Globe, from East to West, and travelling every year between his Tropicks (the Limits and Boundaries prescribed him of God beyond which he is not to pass) from South to North and from North to South, giving shorter days to those who inhabite the middle of the Earth, under the Torrid Zone, they not being able to bear his longer continuance above their Horizon; because of his scorching heat, but longer to these who can better endure it under the temperate, and yet longest to these who live nearest to the Frigid Zones or to the Poles, whom his heat cannot prejudice, as it doth these who live under or near to the Line or middle of the Earth on whom he darteth down his Perpendicular Rays, wherefore the Wisdom of his Maker will have him to stay a shorter time above their Horizon. *How wonderful then in Counsel and excellent in working is this God, whereupon not only his Saints do bless him for the benefites wherewith they are loaden, but all his Works do praise him after their manner.*

Caves.

There are several Caves here or hollow places in and through the Rocks; particularly there is one in the Isle of *Unst*, entering from the Sea at one side of the Isle, and opposite thereunto on the other side, there is another going in, as it were meeting the former, unto the end of any of which, none will undertake to goe, tho it hath been attempted, the rage of the Sea in these Caverns of the Earth, the failing of the Light of Day, and the raggedness of the Rocks by which they must pass making it terrible unto them, as also the thickness of the Air, something annoying them; but the Entries thereunto being opposite one to another, giveth ground to judge, that it is an continued cave from the one side of the Isle to the other, tho 4 Miles broad: which cannot

not

not be thought to be artificial but natural washen through by the violence of the Waves; and the less wonder it is for it so to be, if we consider, that if *Gutta cavat lapidem*, much more *rapidi & tumidi fluctus cavabunt*, that if in a short time the drop will wear the Stone, much more in the Tract of some Thousands of Years the raging and tempestuous Waves daily breaking on the Rocks will produce this Effect, and that more in some places than in others, where the Rock will be more friable and brittle, and the force of the Waves less broken by the bounding and swadling sand.

There is something like unto this yet more surprising in the Isle of Foutla, on the West side of the Mainland, if it be true what is storied of it: In this Isle on the top of a hill there is a hole the mouth whereof may be (and some say now is) covered with a Slait-stone going downwards to the bottom of the Rock, which is said to be of a great depth, particularly a Dutch Ship-master is reported to have made a trial thereof, for the gratifying his curiosity, by taking up a barrel of lines with him, which he let all down, and yet could not sound the bottom: Some say he let down 2. barrels, which is very wonderful, considering a barrel of lines is reckoned to be several, some say 9. Miles of length: What can be the reason of such a Conveyance from the top of the Rock to the bottom, and further if we may give credit to what is said, I cannot possibly imagine, for that such a thing should be done by Art, we cannot well conceive the reason why, nor the Manner how it could be done, and that nature should have such an operation will be as difficult to unfold.

A hole in  
Foutla.

That this Countrey is generally Mossy, soft and spongy hath been formerlie told, as likewise that it is dangerous for people to travel through it; of which many instances may be given. I shall only name two, which I had from the Ministers of the respective bounds, one Traveling in the Isle of Yell, fell unto such a Mossy and loose piece of ground, his Horse beneath him, Furniture and

Dange-  
rous Tra-  
veling.



and all sank down, and was no more seen, and he himself with great difficulty struggled out and was saved. And another in the Parish of *Tingwal* on the *Main*, not long since, walking on foot not far from his own House, fell into such another place, wherein there did not appear to be any hazard and over which several times formerly he thought he had passed with safety, and sank down to the arm pits, but he by stretching out his Arms, keeping his head above the surface of the ground, by the help of his servant then providentially with him and a staff fixed in the ground, got wrestled out: So dangerous it is Traveling here even to the Inhabitants.

Variation  
of the  
Compass  
remark-  
able as at  
*Udsta*.

On the West side of the Isle of *Fetlor*, there is a place whereon a Gentlemans House called *Udsta* into which place or House if a *Mariners* Needle and Compass be brought, the Needle resteth not in its Poles, as it doth in other places, but hath a tremulous undulating motion, and sometimes turneth round, as some say, to all the points of the Horizon; And a Gentleman who was inquisitive to know the truth of this told me, that upon trial he found it to be so, and further to try the experiment he took the Compass to the top of the House, where it had the same effect. And one of the *Ministers* of the Northern Isles informed me that if any Ship or Boat Sailed by, or came nigh unto that place, the same did betall their Compass. Also there is a little Hill nigh to the Sea on the West-side of the Isle of *Whalsey*, to which if the Compass be brought, the Flowr de Luce, or that point, which is ordinarily obverted to the North, turneth about to the South, but if the Compass be removed the distance of two or three foot from the top of the Hill, there is no such effect produced: This the late Minister of the place assured me of, having tried the experiment.

And on  
a Hill in  
*Whalsey*.

Observes  
thereupon.

The many wonderful properties and effects of the *Magnes* or *Load-Stone*, and of other things endued with, or which do partake of this Magnetick vertue, disco-

discovered in these latter Ages, hath deservedly raised the Admiration of *Philosophers*, and awakened them to make a diligent enquire and Search, into the reasons of these strange Phenomena. That the Magnes hath two Poles answering to the Poles of the World, to which it turneth it self; That the Load Stone draweth Iron unto it; That Iron brought unto and rubbed upon the Load-Stone receiveth from it that Attractive, or as some will have it, that impulsive vertue and power, and other qualities inherent in it [hence the invention of the Needle, so useful and necessary to Mariners for directing of their Courtes] That if there be two spherical Load-Stones, they will turn to one another, as each of them doth to the Poles of the Earth, and if they be detained in a contrary position, they will flee from one another: And so is it with the needle in the compass, when a Load Stone or piece of Iron is brought unto it, the needle either cometh to, or fleeth from it according to its situation, wherfore Mariners are careful that no iron be in, nor lying near unto their Light-room where the compass standeth. That tho you should take the Needle from its beloved Pole, yet when let alone and left to it self, it will incontinently move and take no rest, until it return thereunto. These strange and uncouth Properties hath the Load Stone, as likewise many others, no less astonishing, reckoned up by it's Admirers; many of which are known to the rudest and most illiterate Mariner, but to explain the nature of the Load-Stone, and to resolve and answer the Proposals of Nature upon the head, by giving the Reasons of these admirable effects, *hoc opus, hic labor est*, this is the difficulty, which hath vexed many, and taken up the Studies of the sagest and most ingenious Modern Philosophers.

I shall not presume to give the reason of this strange Phenomenon, the Needles leaving it's rest at the Pole and betaking it self to such a motion, whether tremulous and undulating, or circular round the points of the

N

compass

Renat  
Des. Car-  
tes in his  
Princip.  
Philos.  
reckoneth  
34.

An Essay  
concern-  
ing the  
Reason  
thereof.



compass; or the Flower de Luce, turning to the South. Only I would suggest two things, which if they tend not to clear what is proposed, they will further hold out how wonderful the Load-stone and its Properties are. First, upon the ordinary supposition, whereby these Properties are explained, that the Earth is as a great Load-stone, on the surface and exterior parts whereof a great number of volatile screw-like Particles, called the *Magnetick matter*, doe uncessantly move, travelling from Pole to Pole alongst the surface of the Earth, whereby the Poles of the Load-stone and the point of the Needle affected with its vertue, are obverted to the Poles of the World; Which supposition being made, we would know that this Magnetick matter may not alwayes have the same motion, but in some places it may be upward and perpendicular to the surface of the Earth; so that in these places where they thus move perpendicularly, the Needle will not be determined to one point, more than to another of the Horizon, this matter alike affecting all the parts of the Needle, by its perpendicular motion; which the *Ingenious Robault* alledgeth as the reason, why the Compass serveth not the use of the *Hollanders*, when they have Sailed far to the North, in order to find out a new and shorter passage to the *East-Indies*, their Needle then not turning to the Poles as it doth in other places, but alike to all the points of the Horizon, the motion of the Magnetick matter in these more Northern places, being in Lines perpendicular to the surface of the Earth: and so likewise it may fall out in other places, where a greater quantity of this Magnetick matter riseth from the Earth.

A 2<sup>d</sup>. thing that I would take notice of, is that this Magnetick matter in it's passage from Pole to Pole meets with several Iron Mines, into which it goeth aside, so diverting its straight Course between the Poles, because it finds an easier passage through the Pores of the Iron, then by passing through other places; hence the

the variation of the Compass is Judged to be, so much talkt of by Mariners, in some places greater, and in others less, accordingly as the Magnetick matter is more or less determined by the several Iron Mines, into which it turneth aside; Now in some places it may so fall out, that there may be a greater quantity of Iron, through which the Magnetick matter passing and from which it arising, may cause such a Motion, whereby the needle not only inclines not to one point more then to another in the Horizon, but also by the Magnetick matters ascending from and returning to the Iron Mines, it may produce such an irregular motion in the needle: And that there is a great quantity of Iron in *Zetland*, may be known by the remarkable variation of the Compass there, for as Mariners inform us when they Sail by the South-End of *Zetland*, they find the variation to be but one point, but when passing the Northend, they find it varies 2 points, and upon this variation in directing their Course to this or the other place, they make their reckoning: Which is very observable that in less then a degree of latitude (for no more will the length of the Isles of *Zetland* be) it varies a point of the Compass, which must be, according to the Reason commonly assigned, because there is much Iron in these Isles, and more especially on the West side of the Isle of *Fetlar*; for other places of the same Isle have no such Influence on the Compass.

That yet much if not the greatest part of the difficulty remains I readily grant, and leaves it to the study of the learned and curious, and indeed in many things to acknowledge our Ignorance hath been reputed no small part of Wisdom, so hard it is to solve and unriddle Natures Secrets, wherein the greatest Lights have been benighted, the following often raising the Foundations of the Doctrines of the Former: How wonderful are the Works of God, that in Wisdom he hath made them all, And how narrow and shallow are our Capacities, that we cannot find out the Works of

Some  
difficulty  
remains.



God, even the most sensible and obvious; How thankful also should we be to God; who hath vouchsafed to us the Light of clearly revealed Truth, which if taken heed unto shall make us perfect, and lead unto Glory.

Little  
Chappels.

There are in these Isles many little Chappels, now generally ruinous, as in the Isle of *Unst* there are 24. and upwards, In the Isle of *Yell* there are 21. and many in other Isles, I saw one of them in the Parish of *Tingval*, wherein also there are several mo; it would have contained scarce 30. People, as I judge, and tho so little, yet very great Stones were in the Walls, which was strange to me, how that in this Countrey, where their Beasts are weak, and they have not the help of Machines, they got them litted and laid. These are said to have been built by Superstitious Zealots in the times of Popery, or as some rather think by Ship-wrackt Seamen, who coming safe to shore, have Built them according to their Vows made by them when in danger, which they dedicated to so many several Saints, whom they looked upon as the Patrons of their Respective Chappels. About which also Men and Women of Old had their night walkings, which occasioned much uncleannels, but now such walkings are but little used.

Snails  
which are  
medicinal  
found  
about the  
walls.

About the Walls of these old Chappels are found Snails, called *Shell-Snails*, which they dry and pulverize, mingling the dust with their drink for the Jaundice, by which means these who labour under this sickness in 3. or 4. days time will recover of the same, but if they let this dust ly for a Year, without making use of it, it turneth into small living Creatures or Vermin, which they dry and bray over again, if they make any further use of it.

A metal  
like Gold  
found in  
*Uzia*.

In *Uzia* an Isle lying nigh to *Unst*, there is a Metal gotten having the colour of Gold, which several of the *Dutch* Merchants have taken with them to *Hamburg*, and tried it there, but by the force of Fire it did not

not become Liquid, but crumbled into small pieces: It is to be had there in great plenty. This sheweth there may be Minerals in these Isles, tho' not known nor searched for.

In the Church-Yard of *Papa-Scour*, in the Parish of *Wals* lyeth a Stone 5 foot long, at the one end two, <sup>A grave-stone in</sup> and at the other one foot broad, concave from the <sup>Papa-Scour.</sup> one end to the other, of which the common Tradition goes, that this stone came a shore on that Isle with a dead Man tied to it, who lys buried there beside it. It appears to have been the Grave stone of some Person of Note in the Country, which sheweth they have also had that Custom, of laying at least some of their dead in such large Stones made Concave, and cut out for the purpose, which hath been frequent in many places with us in *Scotland*.

At a little distance from *Papa Scour*, lyes a Rock <sup>A Rock in the sea</sup> encompassed with the Sea called *Fran-a-Stack*, which is <sup>where the ruins of an old house.</sup> a *Danish* word, and signifieth, our *Ladys Rock*, upon which are to be seen, the Ruines of a House, wherein they say, a Gentleman did put his Daughter, that so she might be shut up and secluded from the company of Men, but tho' a Maiden when put in, yet she was found with Child when brought out, notwithstanding of her being so closely kept, but whither this came to pass by a Golden Shower (the most powerful Courtship) or not, the Country hath lost the Tradition: However it seemeth strange, how a House should be Built on such a bare and small Rock, when so many large and pleasant Isles were near unto it.

The three Iron-Cannons formerly mentioned now <sup>Cannons</sup> lying in the *Citadale* of *Lerwick*, being rusted by the Sea, <sup>discharge themselves.</sup> wherein they had lien for 80. Years; The Inhabitants of *Lerwick* to take of the rust, and so fit them for their use, about 9 Years ago did set a heap of Pires about them, which they putting Fire unto, the Guns so soon as they were warmed and hot, did all discharge themselves to the great surprisal of the Spectatours and



and the Balls as some observed, went half over *Brassa-Sound*. Which deserveth some remark, that the Powder all that time should retain its Elastick Force, the water if at all, yet not so insinuating it self with the Powder, as to wash it away, or much diminish its vertue. These who were Eye witnesses gave me this Relation.

Fishes and  
Cattel  
little or no  
liver.

It is observable that the former Year 1699. the Fishes had little or no Liver, but something black in lieu thereof, which was a great loss to the Fishers, they making their Oyl of those Livers, As also the Oxen, Sheep, Swine, &c. had little or no Fat on their Livers which uleth not to be, there being a kind of Consumption upon the Livers of Creatures both by Sea and Land; which mindeth me of *Rom. 8. 22. Man's sins making the Creation to groan, and earnestly long as with an uplified head, for a deliverance*, So that if the Creatures could speak with *Balaam's Ass*, they would reprove the madncis and sin of Man.

In *Vaia*  
no Cat  
will live.

There is a little Isle on the West side of *Waes* called *Vaia*, wherein there is no Cat, neither will any stay tho brought in, as hath been done for trial, but will quickly be gone, they either dying, or betaking themselves to Sea, they endeavour to sweem to the next Isle: Yet about 50. Years ago there was one seen upon this Isle, about that time when a Gentleman the Proprietor thereof was Tormented and put to death by the Witches, but never any were seen since, save what were brought in for trial, as now said. The reason of this I could not learn from the Ministers, who gave the Information, it is like because of the Air, or the smell of something upon the Isle, tho not perceivable by the Inhabitants, which agreeth not with the Temper and Constitution of these Animals.

Knop of  
*Kebister*  
where a  
Varlet or  
Wizard  
lived.

About a Mile from *Tingwal* to the North, there is a Hill called the *Knop of Kebister* or *Luggies Know*, nigh to which Hill there is a House called *Kebister*, where a Varlet or Wizard lived, comonly designed

*Luggie*

*Luggie*, concerning whom it was reported that when the Sea was so Tempestuous, that the Boats durst not go off to the Fishing, he used to go to that Hill or Know, wherein a hole, into which he let down his Lines and took up any Fish he pleased, as a Cod or Ling &c. which no other could do but himself: Also when Fishing at Sea, he would at his pleasure take up any rosted Fish with his Line, with the Intrals or Guts out of it, and so ready for his use: This was certainly done by the Agency of evil Spirits, with whom he was in Compact and Covenant, but the OEconomy of the Kingdom of Darkness is very wonderful and little known to us. He being convicted of Witchcraft was burnt nigh to *Scalloway*.

As for Witches I did not hear much of them, as if they abounded more in this, than other Countries, tho I make no question, but that there are many such here thus deluded by the Devil: There is not then such ground for what is so commonly talkt by many with us anent their Devilry, which might have affrighted us if given heed unto, as if it were dangerous going or living there; Tho it is said here, there are many of this Hellish Stamp in *Island*, *Lapland*, and other places to the North of *Zetland*, which may occasion the mistake.

We said before that there were but few Rats, and that only in some of the Isles, and thought to come out of Ships; but that they had Mice in abundance; yet in the Isles of *Burra* and *Haskashy* no Mice are to be found, yea if they take some dust or Earth out of these Isles to other places where they are, they will forsake such places, where the dust is laid. It may be for the like reason, why no Cats can or will live in *Uaisla*.

Sometimes when the Ships are lying nigh Land, the Rats will come ashore, which when any of the *Hol-landers* or others see, they look upon it as Fatal to the Ship out of which they come, portending that her end

Concern-  
ing witch-  
es.

Concern-  
ing Rats  
and Mice.

When  
Rats leave  
the Ships  
it is lookt  
upon by  
Mariners  
as fatal to  
these Ships.

some



some way or other will shortly approach; And likewise it is observed that these Rats will not live above 3 or 4 Years in that Land to which they come. Some of our Seamen tell us of the like as to their Ships; It is talkt also that these Creatures will leave Houses, before any dismal accident befall them. What ground there is either for the one or the other I know not, but if true it will be hard, I suppose, to give the reason thereof.

## Evil Spirits

Not above 40 or 50 Years ago, almost every Family had a *Brouny* or evil Spirit so called, which served them, to whom they gave a Sacrifice for his Service; as when they Churned their Milk, they took a part thereof and sprinkled every corner of the House with it for Brounies use, likewise when they Brewed, they had a Stone which they called *Brounies Stone*, wherein there was a little hole, into which they poured some Wort for a Sacrifice to Brouny. My Informer a Minister in the Country told me, that he had conversed with an old Man, who when young used to Brew, and sometimes read upon his Bible, to whom an old Woman in the House said, that Brouny was displeased with that Book he read upon, which if he continued to do, they would get no more service of Brouny; But he being better instructed from that Book, which was Brounies Eye-fore and the object of his wrath, when he Brewed, he would not suffer any Sacrifice to be given to Brouny, whereupon the 1<sup>st</sup>. and 2<sup>d</sup>. Brewings were spilt and for no use, tho the Wort wrought well, yet in a little time it left off working and grew cold; but of the 3<sup>d</sup> Browst or Brewing he had Ale very good, tho he would not give any Sacrifice to Brouny; with whom afterwards they were no more troubled. I had also from the same Informer, that a Lady in *Unst* now deceased told him, that when she first took up House, she refused to give a Sacrifice to Brouny upon which the 1<sup>st</sup>. and 2<sup>d</sup>. Brewings misgave likewise, but the 3<sup>d</sup>. was good; and Brouny not being regarded

garded nor rewarded, as formerly he had been, abandoned his wonted service. Which cleareth that Scripture *Resist the Devil and he will flee from you.* They also had *ya. 4. 7.* Stacks of Corn, which they called *Brounies Stacks*, which tho they were not bound with straw ropes, or any way fenced, as other Stacks use to be, yet the greatest storm of Wind was not able to blow any straw off them.

Now I do not hear of any such appearances the Devil makes in these Isles, so great and many are the blessings which attend a Gospel dispensation: The Brounies, Fairies and other evil Spirits that haunted and were familiar in our Houses, were dismissed, and fled at the breaking up of our Reformation (if we may except but a few places not yet well reformed from Popish Dregs) as the Heathen Oracles were silenced at the coming of our LORD, and the going forth of his Apostles; so that our first noble Reformers might have returned and said to their Master, as the *70 Lu: 10. 17.* once did; *Lord even the Devils are subject to us through thy Name.* And tho this restraint put upon the Devil was far latter in these Northern places than with us, to whom the Light of a Preached Gospel, did more early shine, yet now also do these Northern Isles enjoy the fruits of this restraint.

About two Years and an half or three Years ago, there was a Boat passing with several Gentlemen of the Countrey in it, and by the way in the *Voe of Quarf*, through which they went, there appeared something unto them with its Head above the Water, which as they could discern, had the Face of an old Man, with a long Beard hanging down; first it appeared at some distance from them, and then coming nearer to their Boat, they had a clear sight of it; The sight was so very strange and affrighting, that all in the Boat were very desirous to be on Land, tho the Day was fair and the Sea calm; a Gentleman declaring, (as a Minister in Company with them, and saw this sight informed me,) that he never saw the like, tho he had travelled through many Seas,

The appearance, of an old Man in the Water.



And of a  
Woman.

I heard another remarkable story like unto this, that about 5 Years since, a Boat at the Fishing drew her Lines, and one of them, as the Fishers thought, having some great Fish upon it, was with greater difficulty then the rest raised from the Ground, but when raised it came more easily to the surface of the Water upon which a Creature like a Woman presented it self at the side of the Boat, it had the Face, Arms Breasts, Shoulders &c. Of a Woman, and long Hair hanging down the Back, but the nether part from below the Breasts, was beneath the Water, so that they could not understand the shape thereof: The two Fishers who were in the Boat being surprized at this strange sight, one of them unadvisedly drew a Knife, and thrust it into her Breast, whereupon she cryed, as they judged, *Alas,* and the Hook giving way she fell backward and was no more seen: The Hook being big went in at her Chin and out at the upper Lip. The Man who thrust the Knife into her is now dead, and, as was observed, never prospered after this, but was still haunted by an evil Spirit, in the appearance of an old Man, who, as he thought, used to lay unto him, *Will ye do such a thing who Killed the Woman*; the other Man then in the Boat is yet alive in the Isle of *Burra*. This a Gentleman and his Lady told me, who said they had it from the Baillie of that place to which the Boat did belong: It being so strange I enquired at severals thereabout, which tho, many were ignorant of, yet some said that they had heard thereof, and judged it to be very true.

Creatures  
in the like-  
ness of  
Men fre-  
quently  
seen at Sea.

That there are Sea-Creatures having the likeness of Men and Women seems to be generally acknowledged by all who have enquired thereunto, they having found it confirmed by the testimony of many in several Countreys, as their Histories do bear. Hence are accounts given of those Sea Monsters, the Meermen and Meermaids, which have not only been seen but apprehended and kept for some time. And hence probably the fiction of the Poets concerning the Sirenes, hath had

had its rise; these enchanting Songsters, translated Meermaids by our Lexicographers, whose snare Ulysses so happily escaped.

They tell us that several such Creatures do appear to Several Fishers at Sea, particularly such as they call *Sea-Trowes*. Such Creatures appear to Fishers at Sea as *Sea-Trowes*. great rolling Creatures, tumbling in the Waters; which if they come among their nets, they break them, and sometimes takes them away with them; if the Fishers see them before they come near, they endeavour to keep them off with their Oars or long Staves, and if they can get them beaten therewith, they will endeavour to do it: The Fishers both in *Oraney* and *Zetland* are affraid when they see them, which panick fear of their's makes them think and sometimes say, that it is the Devil in the shape of such Creatures, whether it be so or not as they apprehend, I cannot determine. However it seems to be more then probable, that evil Spirits frequent both Sea and Land.

A Gentleman in the Parish of *Dunrossness* told one of the Ministers in this Countrey, that about 5 Years since a Plough in this Parish did cast up fresh Cockles, tho the place where the Plough was going, was three quarters of a Mile from the Sea; which Cockles the Gentlemen saw made ready and eaten. How these Shell Fishes came there, and should be fed at such a distance from their ordinary Element I cannot know, if they have not been cast upon Land by a violent Storm, much of the Ground of this Parish, especially what they Labour lying very low, and the Sea hath been observed in such Storms both, to cast out Stones and Fishes; Or if these Cockles have been found in some deep Furrow, from which to the Sea there hath been a conveyance by some small stream, upon which the Sea hath flowed in stream Tides, especially when there is also some storm blowing. If only Shells were found, such as of Oysters and the like, the marvel would not be great, seeing such are found upon the tops of high Mountains, at a greater distance from the Sea, which



in all probability have been there since the Universal deluge; but that any Shell-Fish should be found at some distance from the Sea and fit for use, is somewhat wonderful and astonishing.

A Tortoise  
found in  
the Sand.

Tho no Tortoises use to be found in all these Northern Seas, yet in *Urre-Firth* in the Parish of *Northmaven*, there was one found alive upon the sand in an ebb the Shell of it was given me as a present by a Gentleman of the Countrey, it is about a Foot length, and a large half Foot in Breadth. The Inhabitants thought it so strange, never any such having been found in these Seas formerly, which ever they came to the knowledge of, that they could not imagine what to make of it, some saying that it hath fallen out of some *East-India* Ship sailing alongst by the Coasts, which looks not so probable.

There is a place in this Countrey called the *Neip* in the Parish of *Nelson* looking to the East Sea, where the Parson of *Orphir* in *Orkney* was Killed; the story is this; *Patrick Stewart Earl of Orkney*, as hath been said, was a great Oppressour, enacting several severe and cruel Acts, whereof complaint was made to *King James 6.* And as it is reported some *Zetlanders* went to the King with their Skin-Coats, laying the oppressed condition of their Countrey before him, wherewith the King was moved, yet altho, not only the Earls Honour and Reputation withall was much stained, and under a cloud by reason of his cruel and oppressive wayes, but his person was hated and abhorred by the People whole Superiour he was, the Parson of *Orphir* did Zealously stand in the Earls defence, notwithstanding whereof the Indignation and kindled wrath of the exasperated People against the Earl increasing, the Parson was forced to flee to *Zetland* for his safety, upon which the People of *Orkney* not quieted, some of them pursued him thither, they say the Pursuers were 4 Brethern of the name of *Sinclar*, who coming to the *Neip* where the Parson had his ordinary residence, they apprehended and dewitted him, one of the Brethren taking

ing a sop of his heart-blood; As for the Earl, being first imprisoned at *Dumbartoun*, he was thence brought to *Edinburgh*, where he was Beheaded. Anno 1614, for Treason and Oppression.

There are also in this Countrey, as well as in *Orkney* many Eagles which destroy their Lambs, Fowls, &c. For the preventing of which, some when they see the Eagles catching or fleeing away with their prey, use a Charm, by taking a string, whereon they cast some knots, and repeats a form of words, which being done the Eagle lets her prey fall, tho at a great distance from the Charmer, an instance of which I had from a Minister, who told me, that about a Month before we came to *Zetland*, there was an Eagle that flew up with a Cock at *Scalloway*, which one of these Charmers seeing, presently took a string, (his garter as was supposed,) and casting some knots thereupon with the using the ordinary words, the Eagle did let the Cock fall into the Sea, which was recovered by a Boat that went out for that end.

Concern-  
ing Eagles.

They tell a pleasant story of an Eagle and a Turbot. About 6 Years since an Eagle fell down on a Turbot Sleeping on the surface of the Water; on the East side of *Brassa*, and having fastned his Claws in her, he attempted to flee up, but the Turbot awakning and being too heavy for him to flee up, with endeavoured to draw him down beneath the Water, thusthey struggled for some time, the Eagle labouring to go up, and the Turbot to go down, till a Boat that was near to them, and beheld the sport took them both, selling the Eagle to the *Hollanders* then in the Countrey. For they say when the Eagle hath fastned his Claws in any Creature, he cannot loose them at his pleasure, but useth to eat them out, so that the prey sometimes cometh to be a snare to this Rapacious Fowl.

Concern-  
ing an  
Eagle and  
a Turbot.

On the West-side of the Mainland, there is a Holm belonging to a Gentleman in the Parish of *North-meyan*, so much frequented by Fowl, that when sometimes they go in to it in the Summer season, Fowls of several kinds

A Holm  
frequented  
by sea  
Fowls.



kinds will flee so thick above their Heads, that they will cloud the very Air, yet therein there are few or none, during the Winter, but in *February* they use to begin to come by pairs, and for two or 3 Dayes after they first come, they will sit so close, that almost they may be taken hold of, which is imputed to their being wearied after a long flight from some far Countrey: The Proprietour of this Holm may almost every Day in Summer take a Basket full of Eggs out of it, and they scarcely be missed, for it is so well furnished, that none almost can set down a Foot for young Fowls or Eggs, which are very serviceable to this Gentleman's House, and the Countrey about.

**Noss of** To the East of *Brass* is an Isle called the *Noss* of *Brassahigh*, wherein a ragged Rock looking to South East, the highest in all this Countrey, serviceable to Mariners for directing their course when Sailling to the West from Eastern Countreys, some Gentlemen told us that they verily think from the surface of the Water to the top of the Rock, it will be 300 Fathoms. upon which a great many Fowls have their Nets, whose Eggs they take in the Summer time, as also some of the Fowls, by letting a Man down from the top of the Rock by a Rope Tied about his middle: Before this Isle lyeth a Rock Raggie On all sides, about 100 Fathomshigh from the surface of the Water, but by reason of its Raggedness and Declivity, and its being surrounded with Sea on all handes, it is scarce possible to climb it. Yet the Owners of the Isle being desirous to be at the Fowls and Eggs numerous upon it, about 100 Years since there was a Man for the hire of a Cowndertook to climb the lesser Rock, and to fasten 2 Pales or Stakes thereupon, which he accordingly did, but in the coming down, he fell into the Sea and Perished.

A Holm  
lying be-  
fore it,  
where  
Fowls nu-  
merous.

The way  
how they  
get into  
this Holm,  
Remark-  
able.

The way how they get into this lesser rock is observable, which is thus; opposite to the two Stakes on the lesser, there are also Stakes fastened on the higher Rock, it being but 16. fathoms over between the Rocks;

Rocks; to which Stakes, ropes are fastned, reaching from Rock to Rock, the Ropes they put through the holes of an Engine called a Craddle; all which being so prepared, a Man getteth into the Cradle, and warpeth himself over from the Noss or the greater Rock to the lesser; and so having made a good purchase of Eggs and Fowls bought at the expence of the danger of his life, he returns the same way he went: These Ropes hang not on all Winter, but in the Summer time, in the Month of June ordinarily, when the Day is calm, they cast the Ropes from the greater to the lesser Rock, Which so they do, they have 1<sup>st</sup>. Some small Rope or Cordage, to which there is a stone fastned, and they keeping both the ends of this small Rope in their hands, an able Man throweth the stone into the lesser Rock, and when casten over the stakes, they heave or lift up this small Rope with a long Pole, that so the Bought of the Rope may be gotten about the stakes; which being done they draw to them the small rope till a greater tied to it be brought about also, and so both ends of the greater Rope they secure by the stakes on the top of the Noss, on which strong and greater Rope the Cradle being put, it runneth from Rock to Rock: Easily a Man in the Cradle goeth from the Noss to the Holm or Rock, by reason of its descent, but with greater difficulty do they return, therefore there is a small Rope tied to the Cradle, whereby Men on the Noss help to draw them back. I do not hear that any where such another Cradle is to be found; How many are the Inventions which Man hath found out.

Απειρὸν τὸ  
πᾶν

Industria  
nihil Im-  
possibile  
Nisi tam  
difficile est  
quod non  
solertia  
vincat.

This Holm is much frequented by Fowls more than any other place on the East side of Zetland, as the other Holm of North-Mewan is on the West side; the Fowls have their Nests on the Holms in a very beautiful order, all set in rows in the form of a Dove coat, and each kind or sort do Nestle by themselves; as the Scarfs by themselves, so the Cetywaicks, Tominories, Mawes &c. There is a Fowl there called the Scutiellan, of a black

This Holm  
frequented  
by Fowls.



black colour, and as big as a Wild Duck, which doth live upon the Vomit and Excrements of other Fowls, whom they pursue and having apprehended them, they cause them Vomit up what meat they have lately taken, not yet digested: The Lords Works both of Nature and of Grace are wonderful, all speaking forth His Glorious Goodness, Wisdom and Power.

Concern-  
ing the  
dangers  
the Inha-  
bitants un-  
dergo.

Remarkable are the Dangers, which many in these Isles do undergo in climbing the Rocks for Fowls and Eggs, especially in *Foula*, where the Inhabitants in the Summer time do most live by this kind of Provision, and are judged to be the best climbers of Rocks in all this Country, for some of them will fasten a Stake or Knife, as some say, in the ground on the top of the Rock, to which they ty a small Rope or Cord, and so they will come down the face of the Rock with this in their hand, 60, 70, or 80. Fathoms, and do return bringing up Eggs and Fowls with them; but indeed very many of them lose their lives this way; yea it is observed that few old Men are to be seen there, they being so cut off before they arrive at old Age; Many of them are weary of the dangers and hazards they daily incur, yet neither will they leave the place, nor give over these perilous attempts, all the sad instances of their Friends and Neighbours Perishing and death cannot have this influence to deter and affright them from undergoing the like hazards: At so small a rate do they value their lives, that for a few Fowls and Eggs they will endanger them, whereas they might have as good and a much safer living elsewhere: As this sheweth both their Folly and their Sin, so what fatigue and danger Men will expose themselves to, for the avoiding Poverty and Straits, for the upholding this Clayie Tabernacle, which ere long will moulder into the dust, and often not so much for the satisfying the necessary cravings of Nature, as the superfluous and insatiable desires of our Lusts. Sometimes one Man will stand on the top of the Rock holding the end of  
the

*Labor om-  
nia vincet  
Improbis  
& duris  
urgens in-  
rebus Ege-  
tas. Virg.*

*Impiger  
extremos  
currit  
Mercator  
ad Indos,  
per Mare  
pauperiem  
fugiens  
per saxa  
per lones.*

the Rope in his hand, and another will go down, which neither is without danger, as they tell us of one who thus holding his Neighbour did let the rope slip, and down fell the Climber into the Sea, but providentially there being a Boat near by, they got hold of him, and took him in, and so came home before his Neighbour, who judged him to have perished: The other Man at length came home with great Sorrow and Greif regrating the Death of his Neighbour, but he hearing that he was already come home, was not a little confounded and astonished at the report: until that at meeting the Man in danger narrated the manner of his deliverance, which afforded unto them both, great matter of refreshment and joy.

In all this Country there are only three Towred Churches, (i. e.) Churches with Towers on them, to wit *Tingwal* on the Mainland, the Church of *Burra* on the Isle of *Burra*, and the Church of *Ireland* a Promontory belonging to the Main, from the top of one of which Towers you can see another; Built they say, by three Sisters, who from their several Towers could give advertisement to one another.

The Church of *Tingwal* standeth on a Valley between two Hills lying East and West, and is about the middle of the Mainland. It was in this Parish in a small Holm, within a Lake nigh to this Church, where the Principal Feud or Judge of the Country; used to sit and give Judgment, hence the Holm to this day is called the *Law-Ting* (from which probably the Parish of *Tingwal* had its name) we go into this Holm by stepping stones, where three or four great Stones are to be seen, upon which the Judge, Clerk and other Officers of the Court did sit: All the Country concerned to be there stood at some distance from the Holm on the side of the Loch, and when any of their Causes was to be Judged or Determined, or the judge found it necessary that any Person should compear before him, he was called upon by the Officer, and went

Three  
towed  
Churches.

A Holm  
called the  
*Law-Ting*



in by these stepping stones, who when heard, returned the same way he came: And tho now this place be not the Seat of Judgement, there is yet something among them to this day, which keepeth up the Memory of their old Practice. for at every end of the Loch there is a House, upon whose Grass the Country Men coming to the Court did leave their Horses, and by reason the Masters of these Houses did suffer a loss this way, they were declared to be Scat-free, hence at this present time, two places in the Parish of *Sansling* do pay Scat for the one, and *Coningsburg* in *Dunrossness* for the other: Scat is a kind of Rent or Due, which is Yearly payed to the King or his *Taxmen*; by the Gentlemen and several others in the Country. This Court is thought to have been kept by the *Danes*, when they were in the Possession of the Country. They also report that when any Person received Sentence of Death upon the Holm, if afterwards he could make his escape through the crowd of People standing on the side of the Loch, without being apprehended, and touch the Steeple of the Church of *Tingwal*, the Sentence of Death was Retrieved and the Condemned obtained an Indemnity: For this Steeple in these days was held as an Asyl for Malefactours, Debtors Charged by their Creditors &c. to flee into.

An obelisk  
between  
*Tingwal*  
and *Scalloway*.

In the way between *Tingwal* and *Scalloway*, there is an high Stone standing in form of an Obelisk as some Ancient Monument, concerning which the People have various Traditions, some saying that in the *Strath* of *Tingwal*, where this Stone is erected, there was a Bloody Fight between the *Danes* and the old Inhabitants or Natives of this Country, and that the *Norwegian* or *Danish* General was killed in this place, where the Stone is set up. Others report that one of the Earls of *Orkney*, had a profligate and prodigal Son, who for this cause being animadverted upon by his Father, fled to *Zetland*, and there built a Castle or a strong House for himself within a Loch at *Stroma*, within two Miles of

of *Tingwal* to the West, the ruines whereof are yet to be seen: His Father not being satisfied with his escape, and the way he took for his Defence, sent from *Orkney* 4. or 5. Men to pursue him, to whom he gave orders that they should bring his Son to him, either dead or alive: The Son thereupon not finding himself safe enough in his Castle, made his escape from the Castle, where the Pursuers lay in Ambush, but was overtaken by them in the *Strath of Tingwal* and killed there, whereupon this Monument was erected: The Pursuers took off his head, and carried it with them to his Father, but in so doing they were so far from gratifying of him, that he caused them all to be put to Death, notwithstanding of the orders given by him.

There is in the Parish of *Tingwal* a little off the way as we go from *Lerwick* to *Scalloway*, a Fountain or Spring of very pure and pleasant Water, which runneth through a great Stone in the Rock by the passage of a round hole, which if you stop, the Water forceth its way through the pores of the Stone in other places, the Stone it seems being very porous and spungy. Concern-  
ing a  
Spring.

One of the Ministers told us of a Monster born the last Year in the Parish of *Neston*, about 9 or 10. Miles from *Lerwick*, That one day when he was coming to the Presbytry, and standing at the Ferry-side over which he was to pass, two Women came to him acquainting him with fear and greif, that their Neighbour near by, had been Travelling in Child-Birth under hard Labour for 3. days past, and had brought forth a Monster, which had upon its Forehead like a Pirwig of Flesh and Hair, raised and towered up, and by the sides of the head, there were like wires of Flesh coming down: Moreover it had two raws of Teeth, with a Mouth like a Rabbet, destitute of Arms and Legs; After the Birth there was some life in it, and it moved a little, but lived not long; the Women assisting at the Birth for a time were affraid to touch it, Monsters  
born.



it being such a strange and formidable sight. This Minister desired to see it, but it was Buried before he came. The same Woman also formerly had brought forth two Monsters, the first whereof was a congealed and undigested lump of Flesh; and the second had a Mouth in its Breast.

We enquired concerning the Woman, and they told us that they knew nothing of Scandal they could lay to her Charge, but that she had lived soberly all her life; only one of the Ministers informed us, that after she had brought forth the first Monster, he heard that for a Years time thereafter, she used to go bare footed to the Church of *Wisaale* every Lord's Day, and pray there according to the Vow she had made after the Birth, thinking thereby, that this might Atone for what was past, and prevent the like for the Future. If this be true, God hath judicially punished her, by Conceiving and Bringing forth the two following Monsters, each more wonderful and preternatural than the other.

God's  
judgments  
on Adul-  
terers.

Several Adulteries came before the *Commission* attended with heinous aggravating Circumstances: One Instance we had very remarkable of one *James Mowat* in the Parish of *North Mevan* who had been lying in Adultery with one *Clara Tulloch*, his Wife being dead not many Years since. Between which *Mowat* and *Tulloch*; there were several Children Procreated, who were all Idiots and Fools, so that they could not keep themselves either from Fire or Water, or put their meat in their Mouths, tho there be one of them of 20 Years, and others of them tho younger, yet come to some considerable Age. Which sheweth the manifest Judgment of God against Adulterers, he often ordering his Providential Dispensations so towards them, that they may read their Sin in their Punishment, as this wretched Man was forced by the power of his so far convinced Conscience to confess before the Presbytry, That he was sensible the Judgments of God were pursuing

suings him, whereof he gave the said sad Instance, as yet to be seen from the Presbyteries Records. Another Adulterer also did Compeir before us, who did continue in the Commission of this his Sin for many Years, and doth bear in his Face the shameful reproof thereof, and the just marks of the Lords Indignation against him for the same. It is a very sad thing for any to be pining away both in Judgments and Sins.

A Minister here told me a passage not to be passed without a Remark of God's Righteous Judgment and Holiness. A certain Woman in his Parish about 10 Years since fell into Adultery with an old Married Man, he to cover his Villany, advised her to give way to another young Mans sinning with her, who then was in suit of her and frequented her Company, that so if there were a Child, she might Father it upon this young and unmarried Man; Accordingly as was advised it fell out, the young Man sinned with her, and she being found with Child, is summoned to compeir before the Session, who having interrogated her concerning her Uncleaness, and who was the Father of the Child she answered that she never knew or had Carnal Dealing with any, save such a young Man. But this covering could not serve the turn in palliating their Filthiness, God in His Wise Providence so ordering it, that tho there was the Interval of 5 Months between the old and the young Mans sinning with her yet when the time of her delivery came, she first brought forth a perfect Child of 9 Months, and the day after another imperfect of 4 Months, according to the several times of the old Man, and the young Mans sinning with her. She being convinced that this was of the Lord, and that she could not hide her sins from God, tho she sought to do it from Men, she ingenuously acknowledged her Guilt with both, and for the Scandal is now giving Satisfaction in the Parish of Unst.

Another instance of God's judgments on Adulterers.

We



Another  
Instance,

We had also the Lamentable Account of the Tragical end of one *Mr. Gilbert Hendry* Adulterer, in repute, for his acuteness of wit and the many excellent Poems he composed: He being a married Man had carnal converse with another Woman, at which his Friends and Wellwishers being greatly concerned, one of them laid hold of an opportunity to accost and set upon him, earnestly intreating he might break off his unclean and debauched converse with that Woman holding out unto him his sin and Misery, and using what Arguments he thought might prevail for that end, but he gave a deaf ear unto all that was said, and by no means would be dissuaded from haunting her Company, yea in contempt of the admonition and reproof, made as if he were going to that Womans House the same night, and so parting from his friend, went in the evening to a Water or Loch side, where he walked for some time alone, and then appeared a Man in company with him all in black, and thus they continued walking together till Night, as the People observing did Judge, and the next Morning this miserable wretch was found dead with his brains dashed out (tho there were no stones near to that place where he lay) on a Hill side at a little distance from the Water, his head and shoulders lying downward to the descent of the Hill, his brains were scattered, and the ground about him was all troden, as if there had been (saith my Informer,) 20 Men and Horses for 24. hours upon the Spot. It is not many Years since this fell out. So bad a recompense doth the Devil give his Vassals and Slaves for their service, for *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will Judge*, which Judgments often he beginneth to inflict in this life, for the punishment of the guilty, and the terrour of all, and to shew that he is of purer eyes then that he can behold such horrid Iniquity; tho the pouring out of the full vials of his Wrath he reserveth for the future, where their worm shall not die, nor the fire for ever be quenched.

Observe on  
the Spanish  
Armado.

The signal defeat and overthrow of the *Spanish Armado*

made that supposed and commonly (tho arrogantly) called *Invincible Navy* Anno 1588. is famous in History, which was especially caused by stormy Winds and Tempests, some thereby sinking at Sea, others spleeting upon the Coasts both of *England* and *France* and especially upon the *North of Scotland*, *Orkney* and *Zetland*; and the *East Isle* had the honour of the *Duke of Medians* being driven ashore upon it, under whose conduct this Navy was, who after his Shipwrack came over to *Dunrossness* in *Zetland*, as an old Gentlewoman Informed me; of whom she heard the Countrey People who saw him, frequently speak, when she was a Child; So the Lord dispersed and broke this huge and formidable Navy that of an hundred and thirty ships which set out from *Spain* with Provision, Ammunition, and other furniture exceeding great, scarce 30. returned; The God of Land and Sea heard and answered the Prayers of his People in *Britain*, the Curse of God pursuing that hellish enterprise notwithstanding of the Infalible Popish benediction on that *Invincible Armado*; for as our Historian *Calderwood* observeth, "The rumour of the great Spanish Armado being blazed abroad, fervent were the Cald. Hist. "Prayers of the Godly in *Scotland*, powerful and peir- on Anno "cing were the Sermons of Preachers, especially in the 1588. "time of Fast, whereupon the Lord uttered his voice against his and his Churches enemies, by terrible things in Righteousness; Our Coasts upon which many of that Fleet were cast away, and some of the Persons in it begged from door to door, proclaiming aloud the Glory of his Justice and Power,

There are no Weasels in all the Northern Isles of *Zetland*, as I am informed, tho numerous in the Mainland, which they report thus came to pass: The Falconer having a Power given him, to get a Hen out of every House, once in the Year; but one Year they refusing, or not being so willing to give, The Falconer out of Revenge, brought the next Year two Weasels with him, which did generate and spread, so that now they are

No Weasels formerly, but now numerous on the Mainland.



are become very destructive to several goods of the Inhabitants, whereof a Gentleman our Informer, told us he had killed severals half an Ell long.

## C H A P. I X.

The Fish-Trade is most considerable, in *Zetland*.

observes  
on their  
Fishtrade.

**O**F all the things remarkable in *Zetland*, their *Fish-Trade* is the most considerable, wherefore I have chosen to speak of it by it self. Which I shall labour to do, by shewing what Fishing they have in these Seas, and what Fishes they do most abound in, and have plenty of; And then hold out who are these who Trade, and what advantages do accrue thereby unto the Inhabitants, with some Reflections upon the whole.

The Fish-  
ing de-  
cayed be-  
side what  
formerly  
it hath  
been.

The Fishing here is much decayed by what it was, for now neither is there such a great number of Fishes taken, nor so easily can they be had, as formerly; for not above 40. or 50. Years since, the Fishers would have taken the great Fishes, such as Killen, Ling &c. in the Voers or Lochs, and that in great numbers, and so were not necessitated to underly such danger and toil, in going out to the Sea, but could have lien before their own doors, and drawn the Fishes, which certainly was more safe, easy, and convenient to them in many Respects: Whereas now they are obliged to put out some Leagues unto the Sea, and so far often that they almost sink the Land, else they cannot have any Fishing, worth their expence and pains, which cannot but be very toilsome and dangerous, in case a storm should arise and blow off the Land, and so put them to Sea, with their little Boats or Yoals, not able to keep long out against the violent and swelling waves; and so hath it fallen out unto some, who being tossed to and fro, whether tide and Wind did drive them, have never seen Land any more. And as it is dangerous,

rous, so it is toilsome and costs them much labour, seeing often they ly some Nights and Days at Sea, and not come ashore.

The Fishing formerly being greater then what now it is; occasioned, they say, some hundreds of mo Ships to resort Yearly unto this Countrey, then what now use to do when Fishes cannot be had for to serve them, and indeed neither now are the Fishes so sought after, as sometime they have been, when they could be easily had, many being willing rather to stay at home and catch what they can about the Coasts, which ordinarily are but the smaller Fishes, then to undergo such hazards and toil in following the greater, which an *Hamburgh-Merchant* waiting for a lading complained to me of.

Notwithstanding their Fishing yet is great.

Altho when we institute the Comparison between the former and the latter times, their present Fishing will appear to be but small, yet if we take it under view as it is in it self without such a respect, we will find it to be very considerable: for tho in some Years it be greater then in others, yet every Year many trading Ships are thereby laded; and this same Year 1700. the Fishing is thought to be very good; an Instance whereof a Merchant gave us, that in one Week in the Month of June, there were taken by some Boats belonging to one place, of *Northmeran* 4000. Ling, all which were brought in for the Loadening of that Ship, wherein he was concerned. And another Gentleman added, that some other Boats at a little distance from these, drew about 700. mo. but this was something extraordinary, and useth not often to fall out, that in one Week they take such a number.

Fishes taken in great numbers Anno 1700.

The Fishes that do most abound here are Killin, Ling &c. which being salted and dried, Foreigners export them to other Countreys; of these, as hath been said, there is a great plenty, but are not ordinarily taken near the Land; as for Haddocks, Whirings and such lesser white Fishes, they care not so much for the seeking after, except what is for their own use, for strangers use

What Fishes abound here.

but



but seldom to buy them: And these greater Fishes they get a greater quantity of in some places, then in others, as off *Dunrosness, Northmewan, Unst, Yell, &c.*

Herring  
numerous.

Great shoals of Herring doe sweem also in these Seas, which are taken in the Summer season, especially in the Month of *July*, and the beginning of August, for sometimes then they will come within a Pennie-stone cast of the shore, and be sweeming so thick, and taken so fast, that one Boat will call upon another, to come and help them, and take a part of their Fishes; These Herrings taken here are reckoned to be very good, if not among the best, that are taken upon the Isles belonging to the *King of Britain's Dominions*, and as now said of the white Fish, so it is of the Herrings, they frequent some places more then others, as off *Brassa* to the East, and between *Brassa* and *Whalsay* or the *Skerries*, where the Bushes doe commonly ly, within sight of the Land of *Zetland*. And whatever may be said of *Grotius his Mare Commune or Liberum*, yet it holds here, for any have or take liberty to come and Fish in these seas, without any way acknowledging that Sovereignty whereunto these Isles do belong.

So Silluks  
and Seths  
out of  
whose  
Livers  
good Oyl  
is got.

There are likewise here a great many Grey Fishes taken, which they call Silluks and Seths, which are judged to be the same kind of Fish, only the Seths are a greater and older Silluks; a thick and fat Fish, for out of one liver of some Seths they will get a pint, in our measure, of Oyl, with which Oyl the Inhabitants pay part of their Rents, and sells the rest unto Merchents. The Oyl they get after this Manner. They put the Liver into a Pot or Pan half full of Water, which when seething, the Oyl by the force of the fire or boiling Water, is drawn from the Liver, which so being separated, and sweeming above, they take or scum it off, and puts in vessels for the use. These Seths are to be had about all the Coasts, but more especially about *Dunrosness, Delton* and some other places. The Silluks as hath been observed, are very numerous in *Ork-*

ney, but more rarely are the *Seths* to be had there, tho the same kind of Fish: but in *Zetland* there is no scarcity of both.

Among the many other excellent Fishes which are here for to be had, there are the *Tusk* a rare, wholesome and delicious Fish, no less pleasant to the taste, then they are to the eye, some of them are as big as *Ling*, of a brown and yellow colour, with a broad tail, when making ready for use they swell in the pan more then any other Fish, when made ready their Fish is very white and clear, when new haled they are much more pleasant to eat then when salted and dryed, for then I think they lose much of their Savour and Relish; They begin to Fish for them about the end of *May* or beginning of *June*, and are taken to the East of the Isle of *Brassa*, or between *Brassa* and *Whalsay*, opening to the Coasts of *Norway*, and here only are they to be found, and more rarely in other places, except off *Dunrosness*, where also sometimes they are got. The Fishers often go out about the beginning of the Week, and not return, home till the end of it, and the further they go off to the Sea, they will get them the bigger, and in greater numbers. They use to sell them to the *Hamburgers* for 8. or 10 *lib.* Scots the 100. or six score, and some of them also are taken to other places, where they are much desired by such as know them.

Those who commonly frequent this Countrey and trade with the Inhabitants are *Hamburgers*, and sometimes *Bremers* and others, who come here ordinarily in the Month of *May* or about the beginning of *June*, and in several places set up Booths or Shops, where they sell Liquours, as Beer, Brandie &c. and wheat-Bread, as that which they call Cringel Bread, and the like, they also sell several sorts of Creme-Ware, as Linen, Muslin &c. And these Merchants seek nothing better in Exchange for their Commodities, then to truck with the Countrey for their Fishes, which when the Fishers engage to, the Merchants will give them ei-

*Tusk* a rare Fish.

This Countrey frequented by *Hamburgers*, *Bremers*, &c.



ther Money or Ware which they please, and so the Fishers going to Sea, what they take, they bring once in the Week or oftener, as they have occasion, and layes them down at their Booth Door, or in any other place where the Merchant appoints them to be laid, and they being there numbered, the Merchants account for them accordingly; these Fishes which are ordinarily great white Fishes as Killen, Ling, and the like, the Merchants or their Servants having dried they take them Aboard of their Ships: Several such Dutch Booths are to be seen through the Isles, as 6 ordinarily in the Isle of Unst, two in Yell &c.

*Holland-  
ers also re-  
pair there,  
unto for  
Herring-  
Fishing*

The *Hollanders* also repair to these Isles in June, as hath been said, for their Herring Fishing, but they cannot be said so properly to Trade with the Countrey, as to Fish upon their Coasts, and they use to bring all sorts of Provisions necessary with them, save some fresh Victuals, as Sheep, Lambs, Hens, &c. Which they buy on shore: Stockins also are brought by the Countrey People from all quarters to Lerwick and sold to these Fishers, for sometimes many thousands of them will be ashore at one time, and ordinary it is with them to buy Stockins to themselves, and some likewise do to their Wives and Children; which is very beneficial to the Inhabitans, for so Money is brought into the Countrey, there is a Vent for the Wooll, and the Poor are Employed. Stockins also are brought from Orkney, and sold there, whereby some gain accrues to the Retailers, who wait the coming of the *Dutch Fleet* for a Market.

*Much ad-  
vantage  
redound-  
eth to  
them from  
their Trade  
with the  
Hamburg-  
ers.*

But especially much advantage doth redound to them from their Trade with the *Hamburgers*, for besides that they are furnished by them with Provisions what necessary what convenient, these Merchants bring a considerable Sum of Money with them, so that as one of their Ministers told me, 7 Ships are ordinarily reckoned to have 3600. Dollars aboard, which they leave behind them not only for Fishes, but also for several

several other things, which are the product of the Country, as Butter, Oyl &c. And if any please not to take their Commodities, they presently give them Money upon the receipt of the Goods. The Proprietors also or Masters of the Ground, upon which these Booths are Built, reap a considerable Gain, for some of them will get 20 Dollars *per annum* for the use of a Houle, in the Summer Season to be a Booth; and I think twice or thrice the Sum will Build them.

Upon the whole of this Chap. we may entertain these following Reflections, First. Hence we may observe, the *Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of GOD*; His *POWER* in that his Hands have made this great and wide Sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable; how many Millions of great and small Fishes are every Year taken, yet the next we expect to be served with as great a number; God giving these Creatures the Sea for their proper Habitation, and providing suitable Provision for them in that Element, where neither Seed-time nor Harvest, yet all these wait upon Him, and he giveth them their Meat in due Season. His *WISDOM*, in that wise and beautiful Order to be observed among these Brutal Creatures; the several kinds knowing their coming and their going time, and their loving to frequent one place of the Water more than another, tho both under the same Climate; Their going forth all of them by Bands, tho they have no King, Overseer or Ruler, these *Squammose Cohortes*, tho not governed by Principles of Reason, yet by their Natural Instinct being reasonably Acted, each to their proper ends for the Maintenance and Preservation of their several kinds, give occasion to reasonable Man to Acknowledge, Admire and Adore, the Infinite Wisdom of his and their Maker. Here also the *GOODNESS of GOD* is to be observed in this, that all these are given for the Service of Man, that not only our Tables should be Furnished with the Creatures that breath in the same Element with us, but also with these  
that

Some reflections on this Chap.

*Pf. 104.*  
25.

*Psal. 104.*  
27.



that live in another, and seeing all these are, as it were  
*Rem. 12. 15* Sacrificed for our use, should we not *Present our selves,*  
*Souls and Bodies living Sacrifices Holy and Acceptable unto*  
*God, which is our Reasonable Service.* Seeing that God  
 hath made Man to have Dominion over the Beasts of  
 the Field, the Fowls of the Air, and the Fishes of the  
*Psal. 8.* Sea, should we not gratefully shew forth His Praise,  
 and say with all the wise Observers of Providence, O  
*Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name in all the*  
*Earth?*

2. It is the Fishing only which makes this Countrey  
 any way desirable, else it would be very unpleasant liv-  
*Hec Boeth. His.* ing there, as *Boeth.* of old did observe, *Quorum opes*  
*universæ in piscibus sole arefactis, quas quotannis ad eos ac-*  
*cedentes Hollandi, Zelandi ac Germani aliarumque rerum*  
*vulgarium permutatione mercantur.* Yea if we abstract  
 from their Fishing-Trade, in many places there could  
 not be any living at all, they not having Fields either  
 for Corn-Land or Grazing; but they Trading in  
 Fishes with Foreign Merchants, who Import many  
 Goods for the more comfortable living of the Countrey;  
 their coming in the Summer is very refreshing to all the  
 Inhabitants, the thoughts and expectation of which in  
 the Winter, doth not a little revive them, when they  
 shall enjoy some better Fare, than what their Countrey  
 doth afford, when *Hamburgh-Liquors* and *Commodi-*  
*ties* shall be brought to their Doors, which being ex-  
 pected and desired, may occasion sometimes their tak-  
 ing of a larger Cup, they knowing that the Booths will  
 not always stand open.

3. It is to be observed, that still the further North  
 we go, the Fishes are to be had in greater abundance,  
*Non om- nis fert omnia Tel- lus.* in *Zetland* more than in *Orkney*, and in *Island* to the  
 North of *Zetland*, more than in either, the Inhabitants  
 there mostly living upon Fishes; And again we may  
 nortice, as there is not such a plenty of Fishes in *Orkney*  
 as in *Zetland*, yet there is a greater of Corn; and so  
 in *Zetland* there is more Corn, than in *Island*, for in  
*Island*

*I*lland they have little if any Corn as the product of their Countrey, as some in *Zetland* did inform me, who have conversed with these that had been there: Therefore the Commonalty generally make use of dried Fishes beaten small in stead of Bread, as *Boeth.* hinteth at, *Ultra Schetlandicas alia quadam Insula, qua pisces arefactos ac sole induratos pistillo contundunt, mox admista aqua in pastillos componunt, atque ad secum torrent, qui illis panis est.* Which sheweth us the great Wisdom of God in His Works of Providence, who bestoweth not all Blessings upon every Nation, but when He denyeth or giveth less of one Blessing to one Nation or Countrey, He alloweth them more of another, which is also often observed with respect to particular Persons. This variety likewise sheweth the necessity and advantage of one Nation or Kingdoms Trading with another.

4. The Fishing-Trade is very Lucrative and Enriching to these who closely follow it, it is commonly said, that it is the Fishing which first raised the *Netherlands* to that pitch of Grandure and Wealth, which now they have arrived at, hence some Historians call the Fishery, *The Gold-Mine of Holland*, and that by their Fishing especially in the *British Seas*. And if it were not so very Gainful what would make them every Year Equip such a numerous Fleet of several hundreds, of Busses, under the Guard and Protection of their Convoyes, but that they know the *Zetland Seas* makes their Mills to go, therefore they do so warmly pursue this Trade, and Encourage the Undertakers thereof. And so it is with the *Hamburgers* and other Merchants especially in the *Hans Towns*, who Trading here during the Summer Season, return home in *August* or *September*, they not only with Fishes serving their Respective Cities, but by sending them also up the Countrey do make a good Market, which engageth and Encourageth them to return every Year and follow the same Trade.

5. The



5. The Consideration of this great Gain that doth redound to the Trading Merchants, hath of late animated some Gentlemen and others in *Zetland*, to enter into a Society or Company for Trading in Fishes, that whereas Strangers make such a good hand with their Fishes, they may as well consult their own Profit and Gain, by Promoting of that Trade, which tendeth so much to the Enriching of others, especially seeing they can do it with far less Trouble and Expence when here at Home, where the Fishes are to be had, which when taken and prepared may be sent Abroad for Sale to Foreign Markets, whereas the *Hamburgers* and others which come here, are obliged to tarry from Home through the Summer, waiting for their Lading.

6. It hath been thought very strange by many, that our own Fishing, for which we have so great and so inviting Advantages beyond others, should yet be so much neglected by our selves, and left to the Improvement of Strangers who reap vast Gain from it; And as this deserves the consideration of the Government, so it might be expected that the late disappointment, in the Holy and Wise Providence, of this Nations Noble and Generous Attempt to have Settled a Foreign Plantation, for raising us from the Dunghill of Contempt and Poverty, and Advancing our Wealth and Trade, will excite both these worthy Undertakers and others to Employ their Stocks and Endeavours in searching after and digging these Mines of the Ocean nearer Home and Profiting by these Blessings, which Providence has brought to our very Doors, especially since thereby not only would a number of able Seamen be Yearly Trained for the use and service of the Nation, and the Nation thereby put in a better Capacity for Undertaking and Supporting greater Projects of Trade in the more remote parts of the World. but likewise many poor People would be Employed who are ready to Starve. And it is more reasonable we should

should Fish in our own Seas, than for Strangers to do; And I do greatly question, if the *Hollanders*, *Hamburgers* or others, would so permit us to Fish in any Seas so nigh to their Land, depending on their Sovereignty, as we do them.

And for this end Shipping would be Encouraged by the Government, and Trading Merchants, as the *Hollanders* do, An Instance whereof we had when in *Zetland*, a *Holland Ship* came into *Brassa Sound* from cruising about the *Faw Isle*, waiting for the *East India Fleet*, having in her Wine, Brandy, Victuals &c. for their use, that they might be Refreshed, before they arrived at their Port, and this the Trading Company neglect not ordinarily to do, which sheweth they are great Encouragers of Trade. And for the Encouraging of Trade, Taxations imposed upon Shipping should be easy, especially now when the Trade is so low, that many Merchants and Ship-Masters, after they have hazarded their Lives and their All, do return Losers Home; For if otherwise no wonder that all concerned in Trade, be Dispirited and Discouraged in attempting any thing that is Noble, which might tend to the Nations Publick Good.

## CHAP. X.

Concerning *Pightland Firth*, the several Tides which meet there, the danger of Passage &c.

THE noise that *Pightland Firth* makes among many Concern- who only have heard thereof as being noted and ing *Pight-* famous for its Danger to Passengers, and the Causes *land Firth.* which concur to render it so, awakened us more particularly to enquire concerning it, which we had opportunity to do, in our Return from *Zetland* by *Ork-*



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 way to *Caithness*. And therefore seeing we passed it in our Voyage, I shall not altogether pass it in this Narrative, but communicate to the Inquisitive, what I know either from my own or others observation anent it.

Why so called.

This Firth is commonly called *Pictland*, *Pightland*, or *Pentland Firth*, doubtless from the *Picts*, whose Kingdom of old *Orkney* was, divided by this Firth from the Continent of *Scotland*: *Blair in his Atlas or Geography* tells us of a cert in Tradition, shewing how it came first to be so Denominated, That the *Picts* on a time being Defeat by the *Scots*, who pursued the Victory unto *Caithness* and *Dungishy Head*, where the Vanquished Remnant so hotly Pursued not judging themselves safe, were forced to take Boats and go over the Firth to *Orkney*, but the *Orkney* Men convening upon the Alarm of their Landing, did so warmly receive them with a sharp Conflict, that the *Picts* were obliged to Retire, and take themselves to their Boats again, with which they going off, and not acquainted with the running of the Tides, they all Perished; upon which sad Catastrophe so Fatal to the *Pictish* Nation, this Firth ever since was called *Pictland* or *Pightland Firth*. *Buchanan* calls it *Pentland Firth*, as it is commonly pronounced from one *PENTHUS*, but who this *Penthus* was, our Historian hath not been pleased to impart unto us, *Nam Pentlandicus montes & fretum Pentlandicum a Pentho non a Picto composita videri possunt*. Some Historians relate, That the *Picts* coming first out of *Germany* into *Orkney*, which they Inhabited for a Season, thence they passed over to *Caithness* and other parts of the North of *Scotland*, so that hence this Firth is called *Pictland Firth*.

*Buch. Hist. l. 2.*

Its breadth and what Coasts it washeth.

The Firth is commonly said to be 12 Miles broad, and I think they are but short, but this may be abundantly compensated by the danger of the passage; it is bounded on the North by the Isles of *Orkney*, and on the South by *Dungishy-head* in *Caithness*, to the West is the *Deucalionian Ocean*, whence the Flood comes;

comes, and to the East is the *German Ocean*, whence the Ebb runneth. The landing places are *Burwick*, the Southermost point of *South-Renal-sha* in *Orkney*, and *Dungisby-head* the northernmost in *Caithness*, called *John Grotts House*, the Northernmost House in *Scotland*, the Man who now liveth in it and keepeth an Inn there is called *John Grot*, who saith this House hath been in the possession of his Predecessours of that name for some Hundreds of Years, which name of *Grot* is frequent in *Caithness*. Upon the Sand by *John Grotts House* are found many small pleasant Buckies and shells, beautified with diverse Colours, which some use to put upon a string as Beeds, and account much of for their rarity. It is also observed of these shells, that not one can be found altogether like another; And upon the review of the parcel I had, I discerned some difference among them; which variety renders them the more beautiful.

*Varietates  
delectas.*

In the Firth are the Isles of *Swinna*, *Stroma* and *Pightland-Skerries*. From *Burwick* to the West-North-West lyes *Swinna*, one of the Isles of *Orkney*, a little Isle where-in are some Inhabitants, who have a good Fishing about the Isle, but often with great danger, not only because it is in *Pightland Firth*, where many Tides do go, but because of some dangerous Wells or Whirle-Pools which are nigh unto it. From *Burwick* about 5 or 6 Miles to South-East lyes *Pightland Skerries*, dangerous to Seamen, these *Skerries* being in the mouth of the Firth to the East, upon which both in Ebb and Flood there goes a great Sea: therein is some good pasture, but not Inhabited, save sometimes in the Summer season. In the Firth also is the Isle of *Stroma*, a little pleasant Isle, abounding with Corns, about a Mile and an half long, and half a Mile broad, and tho' it be in the Firth, yet it is not reckoned as one of the Isles of *Orkney*, because of its vicinity to *Caithness*, from which it is but about 2 Miles distant, and this is the only Isle

The Isles  
of *Swinna*,  
*Pight-*  
*land Sker-*  
*ries* and  
*Stroma* in  
the Firth.



which belongs unto *Cathness*, and is still under the Jurisdiction of the Lords of that Countrey.

Besides the  
Isles some  
Skerries.

Besides the Isles there are also some Skerries, as before *Barmick* not half a Mile from Land there is one seen at an Ebb, upon which about 3 Years ago was cast away a Ship belonging to *Aberdeen*, and all the Men in her, as they say, were lost.

Many  
Tides go  
here.

Altho the Sea in this Firth floweth and ebbleth twice in the 24 Hours, as it doth in other places, yet there is a meeting of many Tides here, which running contrary one to another, cause that great rage and as it were a conflict of Waters, which is terrible to behold, and dangerous to engage with: What is the number of these Tides cannot well be condescended upon, some say 13; others 18; and others 24. *Blam in his Geography* hinteth at this, and the reason thereof, shewing that the Sea running among the *Orkney* Isles, is thereby restrained, and made to go through the Isles as so many Water-Spouts, which meeting in this Firth render it so formidable and dangerous. But because of the pertinency and elegancy of the Historian, upon this head, I shall give his own Words: "Frerum

Geogra.  
Blav. de  
Fræto  
Pentl-  
landia.

"hoc Navigantibus formidabile, neque nisi statis temporibus, quanquam positis ventis, trajectui opportunum. Causa est cum æstus maris quotidie a septentrionibus inciretur in his locis Orchadas circumfusis iisque iuxta, hic primum objectu terrarum coercetur, unde vis illa immensa aquarum multis canalibus insulas illas permeans, dein reliquo mari in hoc Fræto effusa, luctantibus etiam maris Vergivii & Orientalis undis formidabiles aquarum Vortices cum lumine navium periculo creat. And indeed when we see the many impetuous Tides coming out into this Firth, from among the Isles of *Orkney*, each bearing that course to which they are determined, by the Land and Isles they wash and beat upon, we will not judge it strange, that there should be such a meeting of Tides in this Firth; for, as some express it, *Every crag-lugge makes*

makes a new Tide, and many Craigs and Lugs are there here.

Hence it is clear that the Tide will run with a greater rapidity and force in some places then in others, as The Tide when we pass that part of the Firth, where we meet stronger with the Tide in the Ebb running off the sides of *Pight-land Skerries* from South East, down into the *Swelchie* in some of *Stroma*, then the men must ply their Oars and work places then hard, lest they be born down into the *Swelchie*, a dangerous in others. place. When also we are 3 or 4 Miles from *Cathness*; there is another such rapid current, coming from the South of *Dungusbay Head* out of *Murray Firth* running upon *Stroma*, both into the *Swelchie* on the North, and into the *Merrie-men of Mey* on the South end of the Isle. In our passage through this Current, for half an hour, we made not, as we could observe, one foot of Way, tho there were 4 Men tugging at the Oars, and no wind blowing; and in all probability we had been carried down upon *Stroma*, if an able man a Passenger: had not taken an Oar, so that then there were 3 Oars upon our Star-board side. Hence in some places there is a swift and in others a soft running Tide, which the Boat-men being well acquainted with, they will sometimes rest from their hard Labour and refresh themselves a little.

In our passage we see the Currents, before we engage with them, running like the Torrents of some great Rivers, and in some places we will see the Waters smooth, and rough round about; the Reason whereof I know not, if it be not because of some Tides meeting there, and as it were for some time quiescent in their Centre, something like unto which I have observed in the meeting of several Rivers in one place.

We see the currents of the Tides.

In the Firth are several places remarkable for their danger; As the *Wells of Swinna* whereof some are on the East-side and others on the West-side of the Isle, they are like unto Whirl-Pools turning about with such a violence, that if any Boat come nigh unto them, they

The Wells of Swinna dangerous



The Wells  
of Swinna  
are Trochi  
admirat  
a puero  
flagellis  
agitat.  
Geogra.  
Blavi.

they will suck or draw it in, and then turneth it about, until it be swallowed up: but these Wells are only dangerous in a Calm, and Sea-men or Fishers to prevent their danger thereby, use when they come near them to cast in an Oar, Barrel or such like thing, on which the Wells closing, they safely pass over. The Minister of the place told me, that about 20 years agoe, there were two Fisher-boats there, who coming nigh the Wells, the Men in the one Boat seeing their danger, one of these men thus afraid took hold of the other Boat by them, and both Boats were swallowed up. One of the Ministers of *Zetland* told me, there were three of these Boats, it so falling out, that he passed the Firth the very day after they perished: Yet notwithstanding of these dangers, the Fishers will not desist from fishing about these Wells, for they observe the nearer they come to them, they have the Fishes both greater, better and more numerous, so the Fishes draw the Men, and the Wells draw both.

And of  
*Tistala*

Near to these Skerries, before *Burwick* formerly mentioned, are also 2 or 3 Wells, called the *Wells of Tistala*, only dangerous in a Flood, as the *Wells of Swinna* are in an Ebb, these Wells, as some do judge, are caused by an Hiatus or Gap in the Earth below: Further I would offer this consideration, that whereas all these Wells are nigh unto ragged Rocks, constantly beat upon by the Tides, there may be some secret conveyances of the Water into Cavernes at the bottom of the Rock, from which they may pass into some other places, where they rise again, and that even in the same Firth, tho such places be unknown, as it is storied of many Rivers, which fall into, and run many Miles below the Earth and come out again in other places. But that which I judge to be more simple, is that several Tides running upon the Rocks, and thence returning and meeting with other Tides cause such a Whirle, as we see behind Mill-wheels some of the water coming from, and another part as it were appearing

How they  
come to  
whirle and  
be so dan-  
gerous.

ing

ing to return upon the Wheel, which cause such a Whirle, and no more doth the whirles in the Firth require a Hiatus in the Earth or a subterraneous passage, then the whirles in the Mills water courses: As for their swallowing up of Boats which are no more seen, this doth not prove it, for these Boats may be broken beneath the water upon Rocks or the like, and the broken timber go to the Sea, of which there is enough found cast a shoar upon these Isles. But many things of this nature are hidden to us, and we can only give our Conjectures anent them.

There is also in this Firth the *Smelchie of Stroma*, a very dangerous place at the North end of the Isle of *Stroma*, where there is a meeting of several Tides which causeth the Water to rage and make a dreadful noise, heard at some distance; As likewise the Sea-billows are raised high, and appear white and frothy very terrible to behold, especially if any storm be lying on, falling unto which all Passengers carefully labour to avoid; As a Gentleman related to me, that once he was in great danger, the Seamen giving themselves over for lost, tho three Miles from the *Smelchie*, and that in a dead calm, when within 2 or 3 pair of Butts to *Stroma*, and tho so near Land, they had been carried down into and perished by this *Smelchie*, as they all laid their accounts; if the Lord had not speedily caused a Northern wind to blow, whereby they got hold of *Stroma*.

There is another dangerous place at the South end of this Isle of *Stroma*, where also a great conflict of Waters, called the *Merry men of Mey*, so called from the house of *Mey* a Gentleman's dwelling in *Caithness*, opposite to this Isle, and called *Merry men* because of the leaping and danceing as it were, of the waters there, tho Mirth and Danceing be far from the minds of the Seamen and Passengers who shall be so unhappy as to fall in among them, especially when any Sea is going.

Seing from what hath been said this Firth is so very dangerous to pals, no wonder that the Mariners and others



Seamen  
observe  
the Tide  
in going  
over.

others be very careful to lay hold on the fittest occasion for a safe Passage, which they find to be a little before the turning of the Tide, when it is beginning to Ebb on the Shore, but the Flood is yet running in the Sea, then they use to go off, that so when they are in or nigh unto the middle of the Firth, the Tide may be upon the turn, which causeth for some time, a still and quiet Sea, (as to the running of the Tides) and the Seamen are not so put to it, in wrestling either against Flood or Ebb. *Buchanan* speaking of these Seas, and the rapid Tides, elegantly expresseth himself, *Dua sunt Tempestates quibus ha angustia sunt superabiles, aut cum aestuum relapsu cessante undarum conflictu, mare tranquillatur, aut ubi pleno alveo equor ad summum incrementi pervenit, languesciente utrinque vi illa, qua undas concitabat, veluti receptus, canente Oceano procellos & vortices pelagi commoti motibus se velut in sua Castra recipientibus.*

What  
wind most  
favourable

Any Wind, they observe, will take them over from *Burwick* to *Caithness*, if tided Right, and the Wind not in S. West, or nigh to that point, and so from *Caithness* to *Burwick*, if not in N. East or nigh to it. But the N. West Wind they call the *King of the Firth*, not only I judge because it will both take them from *Caithness* to *Orkney*, and from *Orkney* to *Caithness*, but also because if it blow any thing, it keepeth them up in an Ebb, from falling into the *Wells of Swinna*, the *Swelch* of *Stroma*, and the *Merry Men of Mey*. By Tiding right also they can come over by the help of Oars, tho there be no Wind: And at any time tho they observe not the Tide, they can pass from *Orkney* to *Caithness*, if it blow a good Gale from N. East, and so from *Caithness* to *Orkney*, if the like blow from S. West. The Boatmen who use to pass the Firth, from their experience know it best, and can avoid the swell of a Sea, when persons of greater skill cannot do it.

No An-  
choring.

At no time is there any Anchoring in this Firth, for if any through Ignorance or otherwise attempt it, with-  
in

in a little time, they must either cut their Cables, as some have done, and be gone, or else if their Anchors or Cables break not, they will be Ridden under: The Experience whereof one of our Ships lately had, who casting Anchor even in the Mouth of the Firth, where the Tides are not so strong, their Anchor within a little time brake, and they behoved to go to Sea.

In a storm especially if it blow from S. East, (which, they say, in the Firth causeth the greatest Sea,) and the Tide be running in the Winds Eye, the Roaring and Swelling Waves are very Terrible, and mount so high, that they could wash not only the Deck, but the Sails and Topmasts of the biggest Ships.

The Houle of *Mey* formerly mentioned is a Myth, Sign or Mark, much observed by Sailers in their passing through this Firth between *Cathness* and *Stroma*, for they carefully fix their Eyes upon the Lums or Chimney Heads of this House, which if they lose sight of, then they are too near *Cathness*, and so ready to run upon Sand-Banks, but if they get also sight of the Houle, then they are too near *Stroma*, and so may spleet upon the Rocks, which ly off the South end of *Stroma*.

Hence we see, *They who go down to the Sea in ships, and do business in the great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Depths; That He is a God Glorious in Holiness, Fearful in Praises, Doing Wonders, He causeth the Wind to blow, and the Sea to flow, at his pleasure; Bounding the impetuous Tides with the Rocks and Sand, saying, Hitherto shall ye come, and no further; and here shall your proud Waves be stayed, which tho they roar yet shall they not prevail. His Goodness, and Power, putting a Restraint upon them; His Wisdom, and Counsel, directing their turning and returning, for his own Glorious Ends. Glory, to His Name.*



Concerning *Caithness*, and what we found to be most Remarkable there.

Concern-  
ing *Caith-  
ness*.

**M**Y Discourse upon *Orkney* and *Zetland* being extended, beyond what either was intended or expected. I shall therefore study to be the briefer upon *Caithness*, as likewise seeing it is supposable, that it may be better known than any of the former, it being upon the same Continent with us. What then is to be said thereupon, I shall dispatch and sum up in this one Chapter.

Its Situa-  
tion.

*Caithness* is the Northernmost Province or Shire in *Scotland*, having *Pightland Firth*, whereby it is divided from *Orkney* on the North, the Entry to *Murray Firth* on the East, *Sutherland* and *Stranaver* on the South, and the *Duncaldonian Ocean* on the West. It is from that high Hill called the *Ord of Caithness*, toward the South, whereby it is divided from *Sutherland*, to *Dungsby-Head*, about 30 Miles long, and from *Thurso* on the West side to *Wick* on the East side of the Countrey 12 Miles broad.

The rea-  
son of the  
Name.

As we were much in the dark about the Etymology of *Orkney* and *Zetland*, so no less are we here in that of *Caithness*, upon which *Blavi* in his *Geography*, giveth us this Notandum, "That many Names of places are something strange, whose Original seem to be neither *Scottish*, *Irish*, *Danish* or *Norwegian*, But unknown uncertain, and most Ancient: Such as *Orbister*, *Loybister*, *Robaster*, *Trumbuster*, and Innumerable

*Blavi. Ge-  
ogra. in  
Caith.*

others, *Caterum Not. Multa locorum Nomina peregrinum quid sapere, quorum origo neque Scotticum, Hibernicum, Danicum aut Norvegicum quid referant, sed ignota, incerta & vetustissima originis videntur Qualia sunt Orbister, Lovibister, Roboster, Trumbuster, & innumera alia, And seeing such Examples of Names which are of an unknown Original, as are given by the Historian, do*

all

all end in *fler*, I would add that the most of the Names of places in this Countrey do end in *fler*, or *flar*, and go as between 20 and 30 in *fler* or *flar*, and about 20 in *go*, as my Informer, who had been for some time in the Countrey did reckon them. Of old *Sutherland*, saith the same Geographer, was called *Catley*, and its Inhabitants *Cattegh*, and so likewise was *Caithness* and *Stranaver*; And in the Irish *Sutherland* to this day is called *Caley*, and its Inhabitants *Catigh*; So that *Catley-ness*, is no other then the Promontory or Cape of the *Cattas* or *Sutherland*, which Promontory is stretched out from the East (or rather the North) side, saith the Geographer of the Mountain of the Ord, *Adco ut Blavi. Catley-ness nihil aliud, sit quam Promontorium Cattas seu Geogra. Sutherlandia, quod Promontorium a latere Orientalis montis Ordis pratenatur.* These *Cattas* are thought to be a People who arrived thither from Germany. Who would have more of this may consult the abovementioned Author. *Buchanan* will have it to be called *Caithness* because of its being Mountainous, but I know not if this Reason will hold, for the Countries adjacent of *Sutherland* and *Stranaver* are more Mountainous, and there are few high Hills or Mountains in it, except at the South end thereof, where it borders with *Sutherland*, but if it should be so called because it is the Ness or Promontory of the Mountains, the Land by North these Mountains falling lower and running out in a Promontory into the Sea, I judge it would hold better, and be said with greater reason. *Boethius* also saith that this Countrey of old was called *Corvana*, but the reason thereof he giveth not.

The Earls of *Caithness* were among the Ancientest The Earls in *Scotland*, and in former times have been very potent in this Corner, as appears by the several old Castles and places of Strength, which then they were in Possession of, but now their Memory is almost extinct. The late Earl *George* dying without Issue, the Laird of *Glenorchy*, now Earl of *Braid-Albin* Married the Dowager, who



who having Purchast the Earls Estate, the Apparent Heir judging himself thereby injured, did gather together some of the Countrey People to recover his Right, but was Defeat by *Glenorchy*; From the Feild they went to the Bar, and Debated the Matter there, whereupon the Lords gave forth this Sentence, that *Glenorchy* should enjoy the Estate, but the Heir should have the Honours, and an Aliment allowed him by *Glenorchy* during his Life. The Heir having died about a Year ago, the Heiress his Sister Succeeds to the Honours, and is in a very mean Condition; living in a place where the former Earls used to keep their Haucks. So to this Ancient and Honourable Family of the Earls of *Caitness* there is almost put in Holy Providence a Period and Close; They who had four great Houses in this Countrey like Palaces, for Pleasure and Convenience, and Castles for Strength, now in their Heirs enjoy none of them, three are Ruinous, and one is Possessed by a Stranger: As likewise there are several other Ruinous Houles to be seen here, who have spewed out their Possessours, so confirming that common Observation, "That sin committed by the Inhabitants, is as Gun-Powder laid to the Foundations of their Houses, which quickly overturneth them, when it pleaseth a Righteous God to fire the Train.

The late  
Earls of  
the Name  
of *Sinclar*.

The late Earls of *Caitness* were of the Name of *Sinclar*, of which Name also are many Gentlemen of the Countrey, who have bought considerable parts of the Earls Estate, from the Earl of *Brass-Albin*: Before the *Sinclars*, the Earls were of the Name of *Shine*, and betor them were the *Haralds*, and before the *Haralds* were the *Ola's*, as the Tradition goeth; concerning which and the manner of their Succession and the Interruption made therein, the Countrey talk several things which I shall not trouble my Reader with: Only I shall observe what is related by *Cambden* a Judicious Antiquary, "That of old the Earls of  
*Caitness*

“*Caithness* were the same with the Earls of *Orkney*, but  
 “at length were divided, the Eldest Daughter of one  
 “*Mulhus* being given in Marriage to *William de S.*  
 “*Claro vulgo Seincier* the Kings Pautler, his Posterity  
 “had this Honour conferred on them, of being Earls  
 “of *Caithness*.

The Country is plealant and very Fertile, abound-  
 ing with Grass and Corn, hence Yearly there is a great  
 quantity of Victual Exported, as An. 1695, there were  
 16000 Bolls Embarked and taken out, for which end  
 it is much frequented by Barks from the Firth, Clyde  
 and other places; for ordinarily when there is no scar-  
 city or dearth, the Meal is sold here at 3 or 4 or at  
 most 5 Merks per Boll. The Cattel and Fishes also are  
 to be had very cheap, as good Kine often in the Sham-  
 bles such as the Countrey doth afford, for 3 or 4 shil:  
*sterl.* and sometimes they say, for 2; so that, as I have  
 heard, some of the more intelligent Inhabitants observe  
 that here is the cheapest Market in the World: And  
 the Gentlemen can live better upon 1000 Merks, then  
 they can do in the South upon 4000. *per annum.* Who  
 may Improve their Stocks to as great if not a greater  
 Advantage, than in any other place in Scotland, for  
 they may save their Rents, having within themselves  
 what Provision is necessary for their Table, and may  
 sell much Store every Year, what to the Inhabitants  
 in the Countrey for their own use, or for salting and  
 sending Abroad, and what to Drovers who take them  
 South: And it is observable that if any Buy a piece  
 of Land, only what is Arable is Accounted for, as for  
 what serveth for Pasture, they use not to take notice  
 of, tho upon that consideration they may value their  
 Acres at a greater Rate. In the way between *Thur-*  
*so* and *Dunnot*, we saw much low Ground overblown  
 with sand, for two Miles back from the Sea, which  
 formerly not many Years since was a pleasant Mea-  
 dow.

The Coun-  
 trey a-  
 bounds  
 with Grass.  
 Corn, Cat-  
 tel, Fishes,  
 so that  
 here the  
 cheapest  
 Market in  
 the World;

Gentle-  
 men live  
 well.

There



Ten Pa-  
rishes  
here.

Many  
Speak *Irish*.

The prin-  
cipal  
Towns.

In the  
Water of  
Thurso  
many  
good Sal-  
mond tak-  
en and  
how.

There are 10. Parishes in this Countrey, 5. of which can be served with Ministers not having the Irish Language, few of the People there speaking it, but the other five cannot be supplied otherwise then by Ministers understanding Irish; in some of these Parishes there being very few who have any knowledge of our Language, and some of the Ministers are obliged to preach both in English and Irish for the Edification of all: some of the Parishes are very wide and populous, which tends to the Increase of Ignorance among many, the Ministers not being able to overtake their Work; some Churches also are ruinous, for when Heritours are not freinds to the Work of God, or cannot agree among themselves, as to the concerting of suitable Measures, for putring or keeping things which concern the Parish, in order; it useth to go ill with Ministers as to their external Accomodation and with Churches as to their Repair.

The two principal Towns in the Countrey are *Wick* and *Thurso*, *Wick* is a Royal Burgh, on the East-side of the Countrey washen by the *German Ocean* at the Mouth of *Murray Firth*, by the side of which runneth a small River, at the mouth of the River there is a Harbour for Boats or Barks to ly in, which they come into at full Sea, but this Harbour is not so much frequented, as another about a Mile to the North-East of *Wick* where they Judge the Boats do ly safer. Opposite to *Wick* lyes *Thurso* at 12. Miles distance, on the West-side of the Countrey, which tho it enjoy not the privilege of a Royal Burgh, yet it is more populous then *Wick*, and hath better buildings in it, by the East-side of the Town runneth a small River called the *Water of Thurso*: They have the best Church in the Countrey well furnished and kept in good order.

In the Water of *Thurso* there is good Salmond-Fishing, which they take two ways, one is by Crues or Creels with crossed or barred doors going from the one side of the Water to the other, so framed that they suffer

suffer the Fishes to go in, but not to go out, out of which sometimes they will take several Horses burdens of Fish. The other way they take them is by a Net, where with they Fish a Pool, which lyeth a little below the Crues, and is about a pair of butts in length: They having spread the net upon the bank, which is long enough to reach the breadth of the Water, they go in with it, and one Man on each side drawing it down the Pool, it is followed with 18. or 20. Men. going in a breast behind it, with long staves or Poles in their hands, wherewith they keep the net to the ground, and loose it when any way entangled; the Pool in some places will rise to the height of the breasts of the waders, but there is no danger. So they bring down the Net softly and warily to the mouth of an Enclosure, which they call a *Stem*, into which the Fishes are driven, where the Fishers standing with this larger Net, others take a lesser Net and going therewith into the *Stem*, catch the Fishes so enclosed, that scarce one can escape, for up the Water they cannot run, because of the larger Net, and neither down can they go, because of the *Stem*, or Stones laid together in form of a Wall, We saw as we could conjecture at one draught upwards of 300. good Salmonds taken, and these who have this Fishing told us that 3 Years ago, they took 500. at a draught, and going through the Pool at the same time with the Net again, they caught other 200. which Salmond for the most part they salt in barrels and send abroad. It is also to be observed that the Salmond keep this Water of *Thurso* all the Year over, and in the Winter Season in Frost and Snow if you break the ice, they are to be had. The Pool is but about half a Mile up the Water from *Thurso*.

There are several Waters or Rivers in the County as *Thurso*, *Wick*, *Dumbeth*, *Rice*, *Force*, and *Bera* Several Waters here.  
*del*, but they are all small, and indeed there is no great River all the way from *Caithness* till we come to *Ness* running by *Inverness* in *Murray*, over which is a strong Bridge



The River  
of Nels.

Bridge lately built consisting of 7. Arches, which River is remarkable for this that it never freezeth, tho the frost be most vehement. yea if then yow bring a Horse unto the River, the iceacles will melt at his feet in the space of time that he is drinking, the River cometh from a Loch called *Loabness*, which also hath the same property, 4. or 5. Miles to the West of *Inverness*. This River I make mention of tho notoit *Cathness*, it being the first considerable one, having any thing of a strong and regular Bridge, which we passed in our return.

Some  
Trees.

There are some Trees here, but they are not so big, as these which are further South, even in *Sutherland*, particularly upon the Water of *Beval* there is a pleasant strath full of small wood. And there is a Garden 3. or 4. Miles to the South-West of *Thurso* very pleasant and well furnished with fruit Trees, much commended by the Inhabitants.

Rocks  
much frequented  
by Fowls.

The Rocks by the Coasts are much frequented by Fowls of various kinds, as Eagles, Hawks &c. such as in *Orkney* and *Zetland*, of which Rocks there are long tracks for whereas in *Sutherland*, *Ross*, and *Aberdeen*, the Sea for the most part is bounded with the sand, here it is bounded with the Rocks, which it washeth and beareth on, and that almost round *Cathness* from the *Ork* to *Dunghy Head* on the East, and by *Dunnet Head*, and *Hoburn Head* to *Stranaver* on the West, except a few Creeks or Bays, several of which are very convenient for Anchoring; especially in *Serribber Bay*, a little to the North West of *Thurso*, there is good Anchoring ground where Ships may safely ride without the fear of hazard by Wind or Tide, the Capes of Land there making a still Sea, and defending the Ships, which, as it were, flee into their Arms from raging and angry *Fightland Firth*. There are here also some Rocks, lying a little off the Land, from which they are broken and disjoyned which they call *Clets*. the same with the *Holms* in *Orkney* and *Zetland*, these *Clets* are almost covered with Sea-Fowls, One way they take these Fowls is pleasant

pleasant tho with great danger, They take a Line, upon the end of which they fasten some Fish-Hooks, above the hooks there is also a Pock fastened, and so from the top of the Rock they let down the Line thus furnished with Pock and hooks, striking the heads of the young Fowls in their Nests with the Pock, upon which the Fowls do all gape and cry; as if it were their Dame coming with meat to them, and so lifting the Line they let the hooks fall into their mouths, which taking hold of the Fowls, they become their prey.

One way they take the Fowls;

There are likewise several Caves going from the Sea within the Rocks, in which the waves make a dreadful noise, such Caves we had occasion to take notice of in our discourse upon *Orkney* and *Zetland*.

Especially there is a kind of Fowls called *Snowfleets* which resort to this Countrey in great numbers in *February*; they are about the bigness of a Sparrow, but exceeding fat and delicious; they flee in flocks, thousands of them together, many of which the Inhabitants do kill and make use of. They use to go away in *April* and are thought to come from the West *Highlands*. They have also a great plenty of Moorfowls, Plovers, as much if not more then in any place of *Scotland*.

Fowls called Snowfleets.

The industry of the Gentlemen here is to be much commended for altho from *Wick* to *Dumbeth* which is 12. Miles long, there be no Harbour or Bay, but a continued tract of ragged, hard and Iron-like Rocks washed by the Sea, yet there are several Harbours forced there by Art, tho denied by Nature, and passages in many places like steps of stairs made from the top of the Rock to the bottom, where their Fish-Boats do ly, and by these passages do bring their Fishes up to the top of the Rocks, where they salt and dry them in Houses made for the purpose, whereby great gain doth redound to the Owners, some making as much by their Fishes, as they do by their Land-Rent.

The Gentlemen's Industry commendable.

As in *Orkney* and *Zetland* there were several old Chappels, which the superstitious Zealots did frequent,

Superstitions.



so is it likewise in *Caithness*, the Ministers told me there is one in *Dunnot Parssh*, beside which there are about 60. Heaps of Stones, which the People coming to, take with them a Stone and throw it into the Heap, bowing themselves also thereunto. Nigh to it likewise there is a Loch called *St. John's Lock*, concerning which there goes a fabulous Tradition, that on *St. Stephen's Day* there was a pleasant Meadow in that place, where now the Loch is, and on *St. John's Day* thereafter, it was turned into this Loch. There is also another in the Parssh of *Rhae*, to which some do take their Children if they be in distrels, and make a Graves at the side of one another laying the Child between them, and so they trie if the Child will recover, but the way how they know; I forbear to mention. But they say there is a Chappel in the Parssh of *Konnesbie* the Northernmost Parssh of all this Countrey, opposite to *Orkney*, which is yet more frequented then any of the former, which some wildly superstitious frequent on some Day about Candlemass, going about it on their bare knees, and thence going to a Water, they cast some of it in handfuls over their heads, and from the Water to an Alehouse, where they use to fill themselves drunk; And when going to these or at them they can scarce even tho threatened be prevailed with to speak. To which hellish Rites some are so addicted that the Ministers judge it next to impossible, to get them weaned and brought there from: But the vigilancy and pains of Ministers especially of late, hath through the Blessing of God not been altogether without success. Which old Chappels both here and in *Orkney* and *Zetland*, I think the Government should cause to be rased, which might prove as the taking away of the Nest Egg.

Tales superstitiouses ludicras recitare est refutare.

The House of *Thurso* by *East*.

The *Earls of Caithness*, as hinted at before, had several strong and convenient dwellings. One about a short half Mile from *Thurso*, called *Thurso by East*, now ruinous, it hath been built in the form of a Court, and the Gates have been decored with cut stone Work, and the

the Gardens, Avenues and office Houses have been conform to the splendour of the House. An honest Countrey Man observing the many great sins that had been committed about that House, is said to have predicted to one of the late Earls its ruine and desolation, saying, "That the Cup of sin was filling, and this House would shortly become a den of Dragons (*using the Scripture phrase*) and seeing there are no such Creatures among us, it shall be of Foxes: And accordingly it was observed that a Fox haunted it when ruinous a few Years after, which stayed there till about 9. or 10. Years ago, when a part of the House was repaired. This I had from one of the Ministers of the Countrey; And another Minister told me that before he bore this Character, he frequently shot Rabbets there, within the Walls of the House.

There are also other four Castles upon one Bay; On the East side of the Countrey nigh to Wick, which belonged to these Earls. The Bay is called *Rice-Bay*, and is 2 or 3 Miles broad, the entry whereof is to the East, but dangerous for Ships to come into, because of the many blind Rocks that ly therein, upon the South side of the Bay next to Wick have been 2 strong Castles, joined to one another by a Draw Bridge, called *Castle Sinclar* and *Girnego*, the former hath been the strongest House, but the latter they ordinarily had their dwelling in; their situation is upon a Rock disjoined from the Land, environed for the most part with the Sea, to which Castles from the Land they passed also by a Bridge which was drawn up every night, whence there was no access to them. I found the year of God upon the Lintel of a window in *Castle-Sinclar* to be 1607; which hath been the year wherein this Castle was built, or at least repaired. Some account these two Castles to be but one, because of their vicinity. They lay, there was much sin committed here, as Drunkenness, Ucleanness, &c. For which, a Righteous God hath turned them, into a ruinous heap. Opposite to *Castle Sinclar*, and *Girnego*,



Castles of  
*Kice Be-  
radel. and  
Hakergsl.*

on the other side of the Bay is *Kice* another Castle, but also ruinous. On the West side of the Bay is the Castle of *Hakergsl*, a strong house at present possessed by a Gentleman, who hath a great interest in the Countrey, but is not descended of the Family of *Caithness*. There are also the ruines of the old Castle of *Beradel* to be seen, situated on a Rock near to the Sea, at the Mouth of a River of that name, to which also they have passed from the Land by a Draw-bridge: Such naturally strong Situations for their Houses they sought out of old, that they might be the more secure, and safe from all violence, Nature as well as Art contributing to their fortification.

A Bishop  
Murdered  
of old.

About a short half Mile to the West of *Thurso* are the ruines of an old Castle, where the Bishop in the 1<sup>st</sup> times of Popery is said to have had his Residence, particularly there was one *Adam* said to be the last Bishop who lived in that house, who having greatly oppressed the People by his rigorous exacting of the Tithes; the People complained thereof to the Earl, who is said in passion to have Answered them, *Go and seeke him, and Sup him too if you please*, Whereupon they went to the Bishops Lodging, and apprehended him, and setting his house on Fire, they actually boiled him and supped off the Broth: Which being known, enquiry was made for the barbarous Actours of this Tragedy; and they being apprehended were put to death, so suffering condign punishment for this horrid Villany. And this Earl is not the only great Person who hath given forth an inconsiderate sentence, upon which barbarous and inhumane Actions have ensued. *Buchanan* writeth this to have been about the year 1222 in the days of *Alexand. 2d. King of Scots*; and saith only, "That they having killed the Monk who attended him" and his Servant, they wounded himself, and drawing him to the Kitchen, they set the house on Fire about him. A little to the West of this, is the house of *Screbister* the residence of the late Bishops, where

*Buchan.  
Hist. in  
vitan  
Alex 2.*

where I think their Lordships had but a mean accommodation; The Revenues of the Bishoprick here are among the smallest in Scotland, which they report thus came to pass, One of the Bishops at the Reformation sold the Churches Revenues far below their value [some say at 12<sup>per</sup> Boll] to the Earl knowing that but for a short time he could enjoy the same.

The Revenues of the Bishoprick small.

There is a Hill in the Parish of *Wick* called *Stony-hill* the Reason of which denomination is said to be this; In the days of *William King of Scots* 1199, as *Buchan* hath it, there was one *Harald Earl of Orkney and Caithness*, who being offended at the Bishop, as having insinuated something to the King against him, apprehended the Bishop, cutting out his Tongue and putting out his Eyes, which being represented to the King, he sent his Forces into *Caithness* and having defeat the Earl, in several Engagements, the Earl fleeing was pursued and being apprehended, his eyes were first put out, and then he was hanged, and all his Male Children were emasculated upon this Hill, which ever since hath been called *Stony-hill*.

Stony Hill.

They told us, there are several high great Stones set up through the Countrey and that ordinarily on Hills, about which are the Rubbish of other Stones, which have served for some end there, and probably have been places of Pagan Worship, as we observed upon *Orkney*, in the Parish of *Bower*, as we passed, we saw an Artificial Mount ditched about of a small circumference, it is like for the same purpose. They have likewise the Tradition of some Picts houses, which have been here of old, the rubbish wherof is yet to be seen in the Parish of *Latheran*, as a Gentleman well acquainted with the Countrey did inform me.

Several Stones set up for Monuments.

In the Parish of *Latheran* we saw the Foundation of a House said to be laid by a Bastard Son of the Earl of *Caithness*, but never perfected; it is founded upon a rising ground nigh to the Sea, where there is a fair prospect of *Murray*, where it is reported the Gentleman had his Mistress, who intended to build it there, that

Foundation of a House laid but not perfected.



that so the might have a view of the house from Murray, and he at the House might see Murray.

*Dunnot Head.*

*Dunnot Head* stretching out into *Pighilana Firth*, is about a Mile in breadth, and 7 Miles in circumference, in it are several Lochs, and some good pasture for Cattel, but no Inhabitants, in it are to be had good Mill-stones, and it is thought there is a Lead-Mine there. In several places in the parish of *Dunnot* there will no Ratts live, and if Earth be brought out thence to other places molested by them, they will be quickly gone.

*The Ord of Caithness.*

The *Ord* which divideth *Caithness* from *Sutherland*, is a high Mountain, as the name *Ord*, which in Irish signifieth an height, doth imply; down which our way from *Caithness* to *Sutherland* doth ly, the Road is but narrow, and the descent steep, and if any stumble thereupon, they are in hazard of falling down a precipice into the Sea at the bottom of the Rock which is is very terrible to behold, but who pass it for the more security use to lead their Horses to the foot of the Hill, which is about a short Mile in length; and no other way there is from *Sutherland* to *Caithness*, or from *Caithness* to *Sutherland* but this, except we go 12 Miles about, but it might be made broader and safer with small expence.

*Signs of Rain and drought.*

It is observed in *Caithness* as an infallible sign almost when they see a Mist or Cloud, lying down upon the foot of the Hills, that then a drought will follow; but if such a Mist or Cloud be on the top thereof, they thence certainly conclude there will be Rain that day.

*A Loch, wherein is a House, built by Robbers.*

In the Parish of *Halkirk* there is a Loch [as there are several Lochs in the Countrey] within which Loch are the ruines of an old house built, they say, by Robbers, that they might be the more safe and secure from the fears of being apprehended. That which is most observable concerning this House, is, that there is not one foot of more ground, then what is within the

the circumference of the Foundation, and upon which it standeth, hence either the Water of the Loch hath wathen away the prominent Rock, if there hath been any through wasting time, or if there was no part of the Rock without the circumference of the Foundation, it is wonderful to consider, how so nigh to the water the Foundation hath been got laid, the Water about the House being of a considerable depth, and the Extreme parts of the Rock upon which the Foundation standeth, not to give way and fail under the weight of the building, which those who have seen this House, are surpris'd at. Upon the Loch they have Boats which come clos to the Walls of the House, for the taking of Fowls of divers kinds, as Maws, Herons &c. several thousands of which do frequent it, having their Nests in the ruinous Walls.

## APPENDIX.

**H**AVING finished and brought to some Issue this Task, in Communicating my Remarks upon these remote Northern places, I shall now wind up all in some breif Animadversions upon the whole, in in order to a practical Improvement.

And 1<sup>st</sup>. We would seriously consider and ponder the wonderful Mercy and Grace of our GOD, in sending the Gospel to the Isles afar off, that these Gentiles who have not formerly heard of His Fame, nor seen his Glory, should have the same declared among them. That through the tender Mercy of our God, the Day spring from on high hath visited and given light to us, who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death. He hath not dealt so with every Nation, with every Isle; the greatest part of which are immerfed and suffe-

Improvement.

Is. 66. 14.

Luk. 1. 78  
79.



## APPENDIX.

suffered to ly in the thick darkness of Paganism. We were among the first of the Nations in these Northern parts of the World, to whom was sent the Word of this Salvation; and according to the Computation of some our King Donald was the first Crowned Head in the World, that bowed to him, who hath on his thigh that name written, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords*. Out of Zion hath gone forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and hath travelled some thousands of Miles Northward to Britain, and the Isles thereto belonging; Hence those places of our highly and early favoured Isle, unaccessible to the valour of the Roman Legions, became subject to Christ; “*Britanno-*  
“*rum loca Romanis inaccessa, Christo subdita sunt;*  
“*O what Reason have we then, to listen to the Evangelical*  
“*Prophets Call, Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his*  
“*Praise from the end of the Earth: Ye that go down to*  
“*the Sea, and all that is therein, the Isles and the Inha-*  
“*bitants thereof. Let them give Glory unto the Lord,*  
“*and declare his Praise in the Islands.*

*Tertull.*

*Is. 42.*

*Is. 10, 12.*

Assembly  
convened  
at Edinb.

An. 1590.

Sess 8.

Calderw.

Hist.

That which may heighten the sense of this distinguishing Mercy and Love, is that we enjoy this Gospel in as great, if not greater purity, then any Nation under Heaven, we have it set forth in its native simplicity, without the Painting and gaudie dress of humane Inventions; which our King James V l. in his first and better Days, was not ashamed to declare in open Assembly. The Ancient Government of our Church is restored, and her Assemblies allowed to sit under the shadow of lawful Authority: by one of which, we were appointed to visite those Northern Isles, and report un- to them at their next Annual Meeting, how matter relating to the Kingdom of Christ, do stand in thol remote Corners, that so proper Methods may be concerted and taken by the delegated Representatives of this National Church, for promoting the Spiritual and Eternal Welfare of the Inhabitants.

Tho we enjoy the clear Light of the glorious Gospel  
of

## APPENDIX.

of Christ, yet are there many evils from which we are not purged until this Day, For beside the abounding Scandals, breaking out to the Dishonour of God, the Reproach of Religion, and the Grief of the Godly, there are many Superstitious Fopperies, Charms, Heathenish and Popish Rites, to which some especially in those Isles, are so much addicted, that it proves a most difficult peice of Work to the most zealous Ministers, to get them reformed.

As all should have it much upon their hearts, that there should be any such dreadful evils now remaining, so all invested with Authority Civil or Ecclesiastick are called to employ their utmost endeavours, for the utter extirpation of all Idolatrous Monuments, and raising of old Chappels so much abused, and that conform to A<sup>c</sup> of Assembly: The Government commanding the Magistrates of these respective bounds so to do, for until that this be, Ministers endeavours whither by Doctrine or Discipline will be the less successful.

Which obstinacy of these poor deluded Souls persisting in their sin and folly, sheweth the Malice and Subtily of that early and grand Enemy of Man's Salvation, labouring to keep some footing in these Isles, if so be his deadly wound might be healed, which the Preaching of the Gospel, the Rod of Gods Power hath given him.

That which gives great advantage to Satan, is the Shameful Ignorance that abounds in this Day of Gospel-Light, this is to him an useful Handle, whereby he keeps his Subjects under his Empire in his Hellish Damnable Service, for while this Vail is on the eye of the Soul, poor People are not capable of discerning what is right or wrong and so are led hood-winkt to Hell; "*Tenebræ sunt Visus impeditivæ, Gressus prohibitivæ, Casus inductivæ &c.*" This black Vail draweth the Screen round about the Soul, whence nei-  
 her Sin, nor Misery are felt or seen: They are dead,  
 as the Pythagoreans and Platonists, used to place a

*1 Cor. 2.*

*14.*



## A P P E N D I X.

Coffin in the room of their outcast Scholars; And the Jews used to say, *A dead Carcase is better than a Disciple void of Wisdom and Knowledge.* And no wonder it be so in such dark Corners, where there are so few Schools and Seminaries of Learning; No wonder the Enemy sow his tares, where there is not sown the seed of Knowledge; And where not a competency of Knowledge there can be no Obedience to, nor Love of God in his Ways: "*Ut Lux est vitæ Directrix, sic Vehiculum Caloris.*"

Blessed are they then who are priviledged with the Means of Knowledge, Schools for the Education of their Yonth, and to whom the doors of the Sanctuary stand open from time to time, where God by his Ministers teacheth Knowledge to those who enquire at his Mouth. Happy they who know and improve their Mercy, the joyful Sound given by the Silver-Trumpets of the Gospel every Lord's-Day; who do receive the Truth in Love; And so must we account for our Mercy; if from the heart we have believed and obeyed the Gospel.

Beside the Book of Gracc, giving light to the Church of Christ, we have also the large expanded Book of the Creation, whose lines are gone out through all the Earth, whence we may spell the Being of a God, his Wisdom. Goodness and Power; The Heavens declare his Glory, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-Work; the various Tides; the Ebbing and the Flowing Sea, bounded by the Sand and Rocks, which it daily beateth on, the Fowls of the Air and Fishes of the Sea, each frequenting their proper habitation, do all proclaim aloud the Glory of him who created them, his Almighty Power preserving them in their beautiful and wonderful order, and his Infinite Wisdom governing and directing them to their several ends, to which they are by him appointed.

Tho so many objects do occur to the diligent Observers of the Works of Creation and Providence, yet w

## A P P E N D I X.

can by the short Cordage of their Reason fathom those depths, so as to give a satisfying account thereof. Still they may rather be the subject of our Admiration notwithstanding of all the Essays, the ingenious and sedulous Enquirers into the Mysteries and Secrets of Nature, have either of old or of late obliged and gratified the World with: Whereupon the humble Saint is ready to express himself with the Wise Man "I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the understanding of a Man; and say Such things are too wonderful for me, yea and I know them not. Prov. 30. 2. 18.

To conclude, We see now but through a glass darkly, we know only in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away, And this also we may apply to the Works of Creation. Most happy we if after all our Travels, Voyages and Labours of whatever kind, we arrive at that place of perfection, where the Militant State of the Church, shall be changed into that of a Triumphant, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary be at rest; When tears shall be wiped from the eyes, sorrow and sighing shall flee away; When that desirable Day shall break, and all shadows be gone; When Satan shall be bruised under our feet, and Death and all its black Retinue be swallowed up in Life and Victory; When no more Darkness in the Understanding, Perverseness in the Will, Disorder in the Affections, or sense of Guilt in the Conscience. When our Duty shall be Praise, our Grace a burning Love even to a bodily present Christ, and our Work shall be to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth, and so be for ever with the Lord. 1 Cor. 13. 9. 10. 12.

## F I N I S.



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MUSEUM  
BRITAN  
NICVM





